

The Only
TAROT
*Book You'll
Ever Need*

INTERPRET THE
CARDS THAT HOLD
YOUR FUTURE

SKYE ALEXANDER



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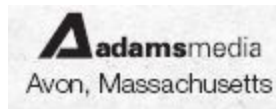
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Introduction

Considering that this book is titled *The Only Tarot Book You'll Ever Need*, you might be surprised to see such a concise and uncomplicated approach to a centuries-old, esoteric topic. After all, wise men and women, sages and sorcerers, world leaders, noted artists, and the intelligentsia of many nations have consulted the Tarot order to discover the secrets of the universe. Its mystical nature and multi-layered symbolism seem to suggest that you could study this ancient oracle for an entire lifetime and barely scratch the surface.

Although this may be true, one of the wonderful things about the Tarot is you don't have to be a scholar or a magician to use this colorful oracle. That's because the Tarot, like dreams, presents images that trigger your intuition and speak to your inner knowing. It's a right-brain tool, not a left-brain one. Its purpose is to help you probe your own subconscious and to find answers within yourself. Consequently, immediate impressions can sometimes be more meaningful than lengthy, intellectual analysis.

When you gaze at Tarot cards, you allow the images to connect with the vast storehouse of knowledge you possess—including things you don't even realize you know. The scenarios, colors, and numbers shown on the cards expand your vision and let you see what lies beyond the surface of everyday reality. They speak to the creative part of your mind, the part that serves as the architect of your life, to guide you in making choices.

Initially, you'll probably be intrigued by the sometimes strange images on the cards. Why is that man hanging upside down? Why are those Sphinx-like creatures pulling a chariot? In earlier times, religious and political authorities took an extremely dim view of the Tarot and other forms of divination. Therefore, the Tarot's originators created a secret, symbolic language to safely convey the hidden wisdom of the Tarot and the magic behind it.

When learning a language, you begin with the ABCs. This book is intended to provide the fundamentals of the Tarot. Standard interpretations of each card are included here to give you a framework that will enable you to develop your own, personal dialogue with the cards. You'll also learn

how to use “spreads”—groupings of cards that tell a story. Spreads let you see the links between past, present, and future—how your thoughts and actions manifest your reality.

Explore. Engage your curiosity. Use your imagination. Keep an open mind and an open heart. The Tarot isn't just for answering everyday questions or telling fortunes; it is a beacon that shines light into the darkest recesses of your inner self and illuminates the vast realms that lie beyond the limits of the conscious mind.

Introduction to the Tarot

The History and Mystery of the Tarot

No one knows exactly when or where the Tarot originated. The earliest known “book” of Tarot cards still in existence dates back to the early 1840s; seventeen of these antique cards still remain. The first entire deck still in existence was painted by the Italian artist Bonifacio Bembo for the Duke of Milan.

Many theories abound about the Tarot’s beginnings. One is that the great library of Alexandria in Egypt, whose female librarian Hypatia was world-renowned for her wisdom and learning, housed scrolls containing all the knowledge of the ancient world. Among these scrolls was the legendary *Book of Thoth*, derived from the mystery schools of ancient Egypt. The allegorical illustrations on Tarot cards are said to contain these secret teachings, which in the Major Arcana represent a course in personal and spiritual development. The Minor Arcana, which was added to the Tarot at a later date, may have derived from an Italian card game known as *tarrochi*. Our present-day poker decks closely resemble the Minor Arcana of the Tarot.

Tarot images are inextricably linked to ancient beliefs, mythologies, and religious systems such as the Hebrew Kabbalah. The cards’ numerological associations have been tied to the Greek mathematician Pythagoras, who taught that letters and numbers contain divine essence and extraordinary powers unrealized by the uninitiated.

Gypsies may have carried the cards to Europe. (The term “Gypsy” is considered to be a corrupt form of the word “Egyptian.”) The Church, however, believed the Tarot was “the devil’s picture book” and quickly condemned the cards as heretical. To possess them was dangerous. Thus, during the Middle Ages the Tarot went underground, along with astrology and many other forms of occult knowledge. (“Occult” simply means

“hidden.”) Yet despite persecution, the knowledge contained in the Tarot continued to be passed down in secret, until interest in the cards surfaced again during the Renaissance.

Though their true history may never be known, you can still use Tarot cards to advise and guide you, to show you what lies ahead, and to gain access to your inner knowing. The amazing insights contained in the Tarot and the deck’s inherent flexibility make it just as relevant during contemporary times as it was to the ancients.

The Major Arcana and Universal Law

A typical Tarot deck consists of seventy-eight cards. Of these, the first twenty-two are identified as the Major Arcana. The fifty-six remaining cards are called the Minor Arcana, presumably because they contain information that is of a less important or less mystical nature. Because the Tarot can be understood as a body of wisdom and guidance, it is sometimes thought of as a book—or more accurately, as two books—of knowledge.

The Major Arcana

These arcana (which means mysteries or secrets) represent the mysteries or secrets of the universe. As such, they are the most complex cards in the deck and require more diligence to understand. Each of the Major Arcana cards, which are also often called trumps, is illustrated with specific symbols or scenarios. The symbols are basically the same in all decks, even though they may differ thematically according to the philosophy of the designer. Each of the Major Arcana cards has a title, such as The Magician, The Empress, The Lovers, The Moon, The Tower, and so forth. They are numbered from zero—The Fool—to twenty-one—The World.

As seems to be the case in most schools of thought, particularly those that have been around for a while, there is disagreement about many aspects of the Major Arcana. Some scholars and authors focus primarily on the numerical order of the cards (zero to twenty-one) contending that they form a system through which the development of an individual’s life can be traced. Some interpreters have placed psychological meanings onto the Major Arcana, while others have viewed them as representing spiritual development and growth.

The Major Arcana cards also describe a path to enlightenment— The Fool’s Journey. Beginning with The Fool, which represents innocence and the initial step of the journey, and ending with The World, which signifies wisdom and completion, the twenty-two cards can be viewed as stages in the seeker’s personal development. According to some schools of thought, they outline a course in initiation into the mysteries of life and the nature of the universe.

The Connection to a Higher Being

The cards in the Major Arcana represent forces beyond yourself and the limits of mundane, earthly, human existence. Depending on your personal worldview, you could think of these forces as fate, god, goddess, cosmic, karma, or your own higher self. Whichever way you choose to see the energies or entities behind the cards, they indicate that something larger, outside yourself is influencing you and the issue about which you are seeking advice.

When many trumps turn up in a reading, it’s a signal that the situation is not entirely in your own hands or that you are not alone in the matter that concerns you. Higher forces outside your control may be at work, perhaps guiding the outcome. Because these cards can be linked with archetypes, they may portray dimensions of greater significance that are influencing your situation.

A reading that contains more cards from the Major Arcana than from the Minor Arcana suggests that you may not have a great deal of choice in how the issue turns out. You might not be able to control what happens. In some cases, a predominance of trump cards shows that previous actions or decisions have set things in motion, and now you are being propelled toward the inevitable result.

TAROT TALK

[There are] forces operating within that are capable of producing phenomenal results. That is, the power of your own suggestion starts the machinery into operation or causes the subconscious mind to begin its creative work [that] leads to belief, and once this belief becomes a deep conviction, things begin to happen.

—Claude M. Bristol, *The Magic of Believing*

The Major Arcana cards possess many different layers. As you work with them, these layers reveal themselves. It's a bit like digging into an archeological site. For example, on a strictly practical level, The Empress may be a direct reference to your mother or your desire to become a mother. On the mundane level, The Magician may refer to your desire to live a more creative life, to be more creative in your work. On the level of spiritual development, The Devil may indicate that it is time for you to throw off the obstacles that are preventing your living more fully and deeply, that you should tend to your soul needs rather than your material concerns.

Each individual unfolds according to his or her own inner blueprint. There's no hurrying the process, which ultimately takes place on its own time schedule. The cycles in life show you the patterns you are following and suggest new directions. (These are most clearly revealed in the astrological chart, which is an excellent adjunct to the Tarot.) The Major Arcana can be a guide that helps you to explore universal concepts as they apply to your life at any given moment.

The Minor Arcana and Everyday Guidance

Most scholars agree that the Minor Arcana were added to the Major Arcana sometime in the fourteenth or fifteenth century. It is believed that this portion of the Tarot was originally used for fortune-telling, and that in earlier times, it was considered safe for nonadepts to have access to this part of the Tarot. The Minor Arcana consists of four suits of fourteen cards each: Wands, Pentacles, Swords, and Cups. Each suit contains four Court Cards (King, Queen, Knight, and Page) and ten number cards from Ace through Ten, also called pip cards.

Everyday Guidance

The Minor Arcana cards can be extremely accurate in answering questions about the here and now, as they refer to specific areas of everyday life and human experience. They do not describe spiritual growth per se, but each of the areas to which these cards refer can certainly be incorporated into a pattern of spiritual development. You don't need to search for some deep mystical meaning to attach to them, however.

A Truth About Tarot

The Minor Arcana may seem less important, but these cards provide immediate information. Through the study of the Minor Arcana, you can observe the ongoing process of how you grow and develop.

The Minor Arcana serve as an adjunct to the Major Arcana—a sort of commentary within the context of the reading. Their main function is to relate the readee to the elements of the everyday world, which exist for all of us no matter how spiritual we are.

Generally speaking, the cards of the Minor Arcana represent lesser, or mundane, lessons. They show the everyday concerns, situations, challenges, and achievements you experience in your personal life. As such, they also present advice and describe conditions and possibilities related to the subject of a reading.

When many (or all) of the cards in a reading come from the Minor Arcana, it's safe to say your future is in your own hands. Your decisions and actions will produce your future. You have the ability to control your destiny.

Let's Get Reading: The Court Cards

In most decks, each suit contains fourteen cards, including four Court Cards. Usually these cards are called the King, Queen, Knight, and Page, although some designers use labels such as Knave, Prince, Princess, Lord, and Lady. The images on the Court Cards are usually straightforward illustrations of a King, a Queen, a Knight, and a Page. Though there may be some variation in costume or colors, depending upon the philosophical orientation of the deck's creator, sometimes the only way to differentiate the suits is to note the symbol of the suit—Cup, Sword, Wand, or Pentacle—which is usually held by the person on the card.

The Court Cards often represent actual people in the life of the individual for whom a reading is being done, or they may personify the readee. They can also be used as Significators, which will be explained in more detail later.

A Truth About Tarot

In some cases, a King could represent a woman with the qualities of that particular King card. For example, the King of Pentacles could signify a strong, successful businesswoman.

King

A king is a powerful ruler who exercises absolute authority over the territory he rules. He is, so to speak, at the top of the heap. Thus, the King of any suit represents a completion point: There's no higher position to attain. A cycle that began with the Ace has been completed, and it's now time to either consolidate your position or begin a new cycle. The level of the King is where you release and let go, complete old tasks, and prepare for a new and more fulfilling way of life. An example of this could be a man who is a highly placed corporate executive, who's reached the pinnacle of success in his field and made a lot of money, and who now decides that it's time to give back to the world. Former U.S. President Jimmy Carter is a good example of the person signified by the King in the Tarot.

Queen

The Queen is a mature woman who is also a ruler in her own right; she's not just the King's consort. As such, she represents a woman who embodies and expresses the feminine qualities of leadership, most importantly the qualities of creativity and cooperation. She has developed skills and wisdom that come only through years of experience. With the Queen, you achieve a level of maturity and self-confidence. You know when to compromise and when to take a firm stand. You are not intimidated by any situation. Yet you remain able to grow and evolve, and you can be flexible through understanding.

The Queen may portray a mature, capable woman, an authority figure who is nurturing and understanding, or a mother image, sometimes the querent's real mother. In certain instances, a Queen card can refer to a man who has the qualities of the Queen—in other words, a man who is deeply attuned to his own feminine nature, such as an artist or a musician.

Knight

A Knight is someone who has been singled out and honored by the ruler for having performed valuable services. A Knight takes on responsibility to

the Crown he serves. At the level of the Knight, you are fully aware of your path, and your aims are clear. You want to get on with it in the most direct way possible, not waste time on irrelevancies. You feel an intense sense of dedication—to a project, an idea, a person. You've taken risks and gotten yourself together for the task at hand, and you are focusing your energies totally toward accomplishing your goal, to make the risk worthwhile. The Knight, who is often considered a messenger or an agent of movement, can refer to a woman as well as to a man. The message the Knight carries or the movement he suggests corresponds to the suit to which the card belongs. The Knight of Wands, for instance, might indicate a message about a creative project or a trip taken for fun and adventure.

Page

The Page is a personal attendant of the royal family, often an errand boy (or girl). It's his or her job to serve in order to advance. The Page represents preparing yourself to succeed at something. It involves being willing to assume a subordinate role—as younger people often do—and to learn about commitment. The Page is about challenging yourself, developing your inner resources, and taking something to a greater stage of accomplishment. You may experience some hesitancy, or feel that you are not fully prepared for the task, but you still hope the situation will turn out as you anticipate.

A Truth About Tarot

The Page cards can represent either sex, but they usually refer to a young person or a child who is involved in the experiences related to the suit to which the Page belongs. Pages can indicate messengers, students/apprentices, youths, or immature adults.

In addition to representing actual people in your life—family members, spouses or lovers, friends, coworkers, neighbors, etc.—the Court Cards can symbolize influences in your environment. They can also refer to situations, conditions, or characteristics of the querent. Because our society today is more egalitarian than it was at the time the Tarot originated, it is possible to see a woman through a male card and vice versa. Here, feedback from the reader can help you to identify the person to whom a Court Card is referring.

Let's Get Counting: The Numbered Cards

Each suit also includes an Ace, which is considered to be the One card, followed by cards numbered Two through Ten. Also known as pip cards, these combine the qualities of the suit with those of the number.

Interpretations of the Minor Arcana are likely to vary, according to the worldview and intentions of the deck's designer. Some writers of books on the Tarot pay little attention to the Minor Arcana; others approach them mainly from the perspective of numerology. In many decks, the pip cards do not display any scenarios to suggest the card's meaning but merely show the corresponding number of the suit symbol. For example, the Three of Cups may simply depict three cups, without any storytelling imagery.

A Truth About Tarot

Pythagoras, a famous Greek philosopher, metaphysician, and mathematician, pursued the mystical significance of numbers as a science in the sixth century B.C.E. He studied numbers for their mathematical qualities and taught that each number contained specific mystical significance. In Pythagoras's philosophy, numbers were an expression of the fundamental laws of the universe.

Although five hundred years' worth of Tarot students and masters have produced some agreement on the meanings of the Minor Arcana cards, there is also a good deal of disagreement, and sometimes the pictures on the cards tell a different story than would be indicated by the combination of number and suit. The Eight of Cups in the Waite deck, for example, shows a man walking away from eight cups, which suggests leaving a relationship or emotional situation behind. However, the number Eight connotes sincerity, abundance, and achievement, so drawing this card would suggest success in matters of the heart. Therefore, you may prefer to base interpretations of the pip cards on the number rather than on any particular illustration—unless, of course, your intuition hooks into the picture and it reveals something.

Sifting Through Symbols and Signs

Finding the Right Deck for You

Much will depend on whether or not you are primarily a visual person. The symbolism of the Major Arcana is pretty much the same in all decks, even if it is depicted through different themes (e.g., Celtic, Native American, Japanese, etc.). For some people, the pictures on the Minor Arcana serve as memory aids to the cards' meanings. Other readers prefer to dispense with storytelling scenarios on the Minor Arcana and are more comfortable with a simpler deck. In some decks it's difficult to tell immediately if a pip card is upright or reversed; in others it's obvious. Look at several decks and if one strikes your eye, try it out. Many stores keep sample packs available for you to examine and test before you buy. If you are less adventurous, just start with the Waite deck, as most books about the Tarot are based on those illustrations.

If after using a deck for a while you do not feel entirely comfortable with it and its symbols, get another deck. Feeling an affinity for the deck you are using is essential. You need a deck that will resonate with your own inner symbology, and that is compatible with your own belief system. Therefore, if the symbols make you anxious or uncertain, you have chosen the wrong deck. If you like the imagery—possibly crystals, animals, angels, herbs and flowers, or some abstract configuration— and if it seems to suit your personal point of view and you feel good using it, then you have found a good deck.

A Truth About Tarot

You can choose a deck intuitively. Try holding a deck in your hands, close your eyes, and see what vibrations come through to you about the deck. Different decks give off different

vibrations, and different people receive different vibrations from the same deck. It's a personal decision!

Using More Than One Deck

Many people like to have two or more decks, sometimes for different purposes. You might decide to keep one deck for your own spiritual development and use another deck for readings. These can be identical or of two different designs. If you read for other people, you'll probably want to have one deck for yourself and another for others to use.

Handling Your Deck

How should you handle your Tarot deck? With utmost care and respect. Treat it as you would any precious possession of great value. Never leave it lying about unattended. Always return it to its special place immediately after you have finished using it for practice, meditation, or a reading.

Blessing and Purifying the Cards

It is a good idea to bless your deck each time before you use it. When you get a new deck, you may want to do a short blessing ceremony before you use it for the first time. This need not be complicated. Simply place the cards in front of you, hold your hands palms down over them, and say, silently or out loud, "I call upon the divine powers to bless and protect these cards, for my intention is to use them for good only. I declare that only good shall come from their use and that all negativity shall be turned away from them."

Personal Preferences

Individual Tarot decks express the themes that are important to their creators. Some use obviously Christian symbology, others are frankly Pagan. Some decks express feminist sensibilities, while others depict Native American, Asian, or African motifs. Some, such as the Wheel of Change Tarot and the Universal Tarot, mix imagery from a variety of cultures and spiritual traditions. It is important that you are both aware of the symbols on your personal deck of cards and feel comfortable with them. Make friends with your cards and let them speak to you in terminology that is relevant to

you. Literally thousands of different Tarot decks exist, and each is as unique as its creator.

The Symbolism of the Suits

Regardless of what spin a particular artist chooses to put on her deck, certain basic concepts will generally prevail. The four suits, for example, are fundamental to the Tarot's structure and composition. These suits correspond to the four elements, which are the building blocks of life, the vital and primal forces of the universe. These elements—Earth, Air, Fire, and Water— exist everywhere in our world, not only in a physical sense, but also as vibrations or energies. We find them depicted not only in the Tarot but also in the four primary tools magicians use, the four directions, the four seasons, the Four Gospels in Christianity, and the Four Noble Truths in Buddhism.

Although the suit symbols are most evident on the Minor Arcana cards, they also appear in the Major Arcana. The Magician or Magus, for instance, is usually pictured with the symbols of all four suits before him, indicating his mastery of all the elements. The four suits may turn up on The World card, too, where they suggest a balance of these fundamental forces.

Wands

The suit of Wands corresponds to the element of Fire. Fire is active, outer-directed, linked with Spirit, will, self-expression, and inspiration. It suggests growth, expansion, and personal power. Because Fire represents archetypal masculine or yang energy, the symbolism used to depict this suit in the Tarot is distinctly phallic. Some decks use other images for the suit of Wands—rods, staves, clubs, branches sprouting leaves, lances, arrows, torches, or divining rods. Tarot of the Old Path shows them as brooms.

Tricks of Tarot

You can find a Tarot deck to suit almost anyone's interests. The Baseball Tarot depicts Wands as—you guessed it—baseball bats. The Cooperstown Tarot depicts Cups as baseball gloves.

Often the people on the Wands cards (in storytelling decks) are shown as warriors, heroes, leaders, or magicians, dynamic and creative people who charge forth into life with confidence and enthusiasm.

When Wands appear in a spread or reading, it's usually an indication that some sort of action or growth is afoot. You might be embarking on an adventure of some kind or may be required to muster your courage in a challenging endeavor. Perhaps you could benefit from using your intuition instead of logic to solve a problem. Maybe you need to have fun, take some risks, assert yourself, or be creative.

Swords

The suit of Swords relates to the element of Air. Like Fire, Air is a masculine/yang force, so its symbol, too, is obviously phallic. Although usually depicted as a mighty battle sword, the suit's symbol may be represented by ordinary knives, athames (ritual daggers used by magicians), scythes, axes, guns, or spears. Some swords are sturdy and functional, others are ornate, reminiscent of King Arthur's Excalibur.

Storytelling decks frequently show the characters on the Swords cards as warriors, scholars, sages, teachers, or seekers, serious and dispassionate individuals who pursue answers to life's great questions. Often the images reveal suffering or strife, perhaps indicating the struggle involved in transforming experience into knowledge, or to illustrate the way in which Rudolf Steiner (on whose work the Waldorf Schools are founded) describes wisdom, which is as "crystallized pain."

When Swords turn up in a reading, it often means that mental or verbal activity is a priority. Perhaps you are overworking your mind. Or you might need to use your head and examine an issue clearly and rationally. The King of Swords, for instance, can advise you not to let your heart rule your head. Swords also represent communication, study, or cutting through murky situations with logic and discrimination.

Cups

The suit of Cups is associated with the element of Water. Water's energy is receptive, inner-directed, reflective, connected with the emotions, creativity, and intuition. Because Water is a feminine or yin element, its symbols suggest the womb. In the Tarot, Cups are usually shown as

chalices or goblets, but any type of vessel can depict the nature of the suit. Some decks picture them as bowls, cauldrons, vases, urns, pitchers, coffee mugs, steins, baskets, or bottles. Regardless of the imagery, the principle is the same—Cups represent the ability to receive and hold.

For the most part, the scenes that appear on these cards suggest comfort, security, and contentment. Because the suit of Cups symbolizes the emotions, the people on the cards are usually shown in relationships of some kind—romantic, familial, friendship.

A Truth About Tarot

Because Cups represent Water and its ability to be reflective and receptive, Cups can also describe a person who is intuitive, compassionate, sensitive, creative, or nurturing. All of these characteristics are traditionally feminine and relate to the inner reflections of a person and her emotional awareness.

A reading that contains many Cups usually emphasizes emotions and/or relationships. Depending on the cards involved, you may be enjoying positive interactions with people you care about or are seeking greater fulfillment in matters of the heart. Perhaps you are suffering a loss or disappointment, or are on your way to recovery and emotional renewal.

Pentacles

Pentacles or pentagrams (five-pointed stars) correspond to the Earth element. Like Water, Earth is a feminine/yin force that energetically relates to our planet as the source of sustenance, security, and stability. The suit of Pentacles represents practical matters, money and resources, the body, and the material world. Tarot decks often portray the suit as coins or discs, sometimes as shields, stones, rings, shells, crystals, wheels, stars, clocks, or loaves of bread. Regardless of the actual image used, the suit symbolizes physical resources, values, practical concerns, material goods, property, and forms of monetary exchange—things that sustain us on the earthly plane. Storytelling decks often depict people on the Pentacles cards engaged in some form of work or commerce, or enjoying the fruits of their labors and the things money can buy.

When Pentacles appear in a spread, it's a sign that financial or work-related matters are prominent in the mind of the person for whom the reading is being done. In some cases, these cards can also signify physical or health issues, or other situations involving the body or one's physical capabilities. The Queen of Pentacles, for example, can indicate a sensual woman who is at home in her body, who loves good food, creature comforts, and the finer things in life. Depending on the cards, this suit may suggest a need to focus on practical concerns. Or you could be too security-conscious and are putting emphasis on material things at the expense of spiritual, emotional, or intellectual considerations.

Look for the Spiritual Art in Numbers

The numbers on the cards reflect stages of development and show how a matter is evolving. When interpreting the number cards of the Minor Arcana, consider the suit, too; it will tell you the area of life to which the number card refers. By combining the meanings of the suit and the number featured on a card, you can determine how the card applies to the particular situation for which the reading is being given.

Ace (One)

One signifies new beginnings. It implies something coming into being, the starting point of a whole new cycle. It represents self-development, creativity, action, progress, a new chance, a rebirth.

Tricks of Tarot

Barbara Moore, author of *The Gilded Tarot Companion*, calls Aces gifts from the universe. They symbolize a chance to start anew and realize possibilities and potential.

The Ace shows that a seed has been planted, meaning that something has begun, though you may not yet know how it will develop. Aces symbolize potential growth. When an Ace appears in your reading, you are being offered a new opportunity. It's up to you to follow through—it won't automatically happen. The Ace indicates you have the choice to initiate something, that the time is ripe for new possibilities and growth.

The energy of One is solitary and self-contained. Drawing an Ace may indicate being alone or withdrawing into isolation to nurture a new idea, project, or experience before going public with it. Aces also can show focus, concentrated energy, and clarity of purpose.

Two

The essence of Two is duality. This number depicts some kind of union or partnership, with another person, a spiritual entity, or two parts of yourself. Two also represents the balance of polarities such as yin and yang, male and female, private and public, separate and together.

Two furthers the direction initiated with the Ace. It represents stabilizing and affirming the new opportunity. Sometimes Two shows a need to achieve balance with whatever new factor is being added to the situation that began with the Ace. Depending on the reading, the Two suggests either increased chances for a desirable outcome or greater obstacles involved in achieving that outcome.

Two's vibration can indicate sensitivity to others, perhaps to the point where you consider their needs over your own. "Two-ness" can also mean a state of immersing yourself in another person or in an idea or project.

Three

We see the essence of Three expressed in the trinity of Mind, Body, and Spirit. It is the number of self-expression and communication, of expansion, openness, optimism, and clarity.

With the Three, you begin to see the big picture, understanding the details of how One and Two combine in your own process of growth and evolution. This is the point at which the project, idea, or relationship you initiated earlier begins to take form.

The number Three represents movement, action, growth, and development, but in some cases expansion can happen too fast. You may scatter your energies or spread yourself too thin. There is a tendency to leap before you look, or to buy now and pay later. However, properly handled, Three's vibration is cheerful, optimistic, and pleasant, representing a period of happiness and benefits, so long as you pay attention to what you are doing.

Four

The number Four equates with foundation. There are four elements, four directions, and four seasons, so Four suggests totality, stability, and security. When Fours appear in a reading, it can indicate a time for self-discipline through work and service, productivity, organization, and pragmatism to establish a sound foundation.

Clarity is important now, so that you can work effectively to make your situation turn out positively. If you are in a place you want to be—a home, job, relationship—you might have to work to maintain stability; if you aren't where you want to be, drawing Fours suggests it's time to plan and work to make appropriate changes.

At this time, life can seem to be all work and no play, but sometimes that's necessary for you to accomplish your objectives. If your goals and purpose are clear, you won't mind doing the work, for you see the end result as beneficial. When Fours turn up in a reading, the message is to take slow, steady, determined steps and move patiently to bring your dreams to fruition.

Five

Five is the number of freedom, instability, and change. Its vibration is active, physical, impulsive, impatient, resourceful, curious, and playful. Drawing Fives in a reading suggests excitement, adventure, movement, and challenges afoot.

A Truth About Tarot

Although Fives are an indication to go for it, consider the risks involved, too. When Fives appear in a reading, you are willing to take risks because you love the excitement involved in the situation. The cards around the Five will indicate whether there is real danger or if things will work out to your advantage.

Sometimes, Five can be too much to handle, especially if you tend to be a quiet, sensitive person. The excitement and changes in your life may seem to be happening too fast, so that you feel you are caught in a whirlwind—or a hurricane. Thus Fives are often connected with stress and instability. You might need to slow down a bit and get some perspective before moving

ahead. If an important decision is involved, “take five” before you make any commitment.

Six

Six is the number of service and social responsibility, caring, compassion, and community involvement. It signifies peace and quiet after the storm of Five. This is a time to keep it simple and attend to everyday needs, to rest, and to get into harmony with yourself and your surroundings. Any misunderstandings that occurred during an earlier period of upheaval can now be resolved harmoniously.

When Sixes appear in a reading, it's time to stop and catch your breath. You have created a comfortable pattern and can reap the rewards of your previous planning (Four) and risk-taking (Five). You feel centered and at ease with yourself and your circumstances. Unfavorable cards in the reading may indicate difficult circumstances yet to be faced, but Six cards rarely show anything negative themselves.

Six's vibration is cooperative; it can represent working with others or providing service of some kind. Just remember to take care of your own needs, too. In some cases, Sixes in a reading can show a tendency toward reclusiveness—just vegging out at home to enjoy a time of ease, especially after a period of intense activity or stress.

Seven

The number Seven symbolizes the inner life, solitude, and soul-searching. Seven is a mystical number depicting wisdom and spirituality; there are seven heavens, seven days of the week (the seventh being holy), seven colors in the visible spectrum, seven notes in a musical scale, and seven major chakras.

When Sevens appear in a reading, it indicates a time of turning inward to discover the meaning of life, what has been happening to you, and why. You may be searching for answers. Perhaps you feel an intense need to be alone. Seven often refers to rebirth, religious inclinations, and spiritual resources. Some people retreat from the busyness of everyday life at this time to attend to their inner development. Emblematic of the path of solitude, analysis, and contemplation, Seven marks a time when you are exploring your own individuality in your own way.

This is not a time to begin projects related to the material or financial world. Your energy is focused on the inner rather than the outer realm. Now is a good time to examine your past experiences and evaluate the present. You might wish to study or research metaphysical subjects, start paying attention to dreams—whatever will help you to find your own true path in life. In some cases, Sevens in the reading may indicate that you are spending too much time alone and need to socialize.

Eight

Eight represents abundance, material prosperity, and worldly power or influence. It is the number of leadership and authority. On the spiritual level, Eight symbolizes cosmic consciousness; infinity's symbol is a figure Eight turned on its side. This powerful number indicates you possess the organizational and managerial skills that contribute to material success—or that you need to develop them. If you have been devoting much of your time and energy to spiritual progress, the appearance of Eights in a reading says it's time to get your financial or worldly affairs in order.

A Truth About Tarot

As the infinity glyph symbolizes wholeness, the number Eight points to the development of multiple aspects of your life—physical, mental, and spiritual.

Eight's vibration is linked with honor, respect, equality, awards, public recognition, power, and abundance in all areas of life. When you draw Eights, the potential for achieving these benefits is likely, but sincerity and dedication are needed.

The Eight cards caution you to consider the welfare of others, too. If there are unfavorable factors in the reading, you may need to be careful with money or possessions. Eights reversed can indicate that you have many issues around abundance—or the lack of it—yet to resolve.

Nine

The number Nine equates with humanitarianism. It represents universal compassion, tolerance for the many differences among different peoples, and the attainment of wisdom through experience. Drawing Nines suggests

you have reached a level where you are comfortable dedicating your life to others' welfare, or to some worthy cause. The challenge is to avoid getting so caught up in the big picture—the greatest good for the greatest number—that you neglect what is closest to you.

Nine symbolizes integration and, in a reading, shows that you have established your life priorities—you know what you want and how you intend to get it. You understand the interaction between you and the world as a continuing process of living, being, moving. The Nine vibration allows you to see beyond the boundaries of the self into the totality of the universal. You are able to give freely of yourself because you feel complete within yourself.

The last single-digit number, Nine represents the end of a cycle. It's time to tie up loose ends. In most cases, the Nine cards depict fulfillment, completion, wholeness, and the sense of satisfaction that comes from having reached a peak after a long, arduous climb.

Ten

Ten represents both an ending and a beginning, the point of transition from the completed cycle to the new cycle, which has not yet manifested. When Tens show up in a reading, whatever you have been working on or involved with is over. You've got whatever you are going to get out of it, and now it is time to bring in the new cycle that's been waiting in the wings.

This can be especially gratifying if you have been experiencing rocky times. If you have become complacent during a good period, drawing Tens tells you to challenge yourself and reach for a higher level. As a compound number, Ten adds an extra dimension in a reading. Like ascending to a higher level of a spiral staircase, you can look down at precisely where you began and chart your progress. Now you have a choice to either stagnate in familiar and comfortable territory or to take a chance and start something new and different.

As happens in any period of transition, you may experience discomfort about making the decision to stay put or move on. You might feel you are sitting on the fence, with one foot on either side, not sure whether to jump all the way over. Sometimes it takes quite a while to get both feet on the same side of the fence. However, you know that "he who hesitates is lost," and though you have the luxury of postponing both decision and action for

a little while, when Tens show up in a reading it's a signal that a decision must be made.

Not Purely Decorative: The Power of Colors

Many Tarot decks display vivid and beautiful color palettes. But the colors shown on the cards are not purely decorative; they embody specific symbolic, spiritual, psychological, and physiological properties as well. For centuries, artists have used colors in their compositions, not only for their aesthetic properties, but also for their ability to convey moods and messages to those who view them.

A Truth About Tarot

Early Christian paintings and stained glass windows often show Jesus and Mary dressed in blue robes, which suggest serenity and compassion. We connect orange with fire, the sun, and warmth, while green represents growth, health, and in some countries, money.

In magical practice, colors correspond to the four elements. Red is associated with Fire, blue with Water, green with Earth, and yellow with Air. Because each suit is linked with an element, many Tarot artists use the colors connected with the corresponding suits to trigger subconscious responses and insights. Therefore, some decks emphasize red on the cards in the suit of Wands, blue on the Cups cards, green on the Pentacles cards, and yellow on the Swords cards.

Studies show that people react psychologically and even physically to colors. For instance, red tends to make us feel stimulated, warmer, and can even raise pulse rate and body temperature slightly. Blue, conversely, calms and cools us. As you familiarize yourself with your Tarot deck, notice how the artist has used colors to express certain qualities.

The Collective Unconscious: Universal Symbolism

Symbols embody the essence of whatever they stand for; they aren't merely a convenient form of shorthand. That's why they have such power, why they appear in diverse and widely separated cultures, and why they have endured for millennia.

Tricks of Tarot

Symbol is myth's vehicle, the chariot by which legend and story, and myth's higher form, religion, is drawn through the heart and mind, and through time. Symbols express underlying patterns of thought and feeling stemming from the mythological roots that still affect people in a very real way.

Symbols that turn up again and again, in all parts of the world, possess universal appeal and resonate in what Swiss psychiatrist C. G. Jung called the collective unconscious. They mean essentially the same thing to everyone, regardless of age, race, religion, or nationality and get around the limitations of the rational, analytical, left-brain. Often we confront these symbols in dreams where they provide guidance and awaken us to parts of ourselves that we may have ignored in our waking lives. The Tarot works in a similar manner.

The following table shows a number of common, universally understood symbols that you may notice on the cards in your Tarot deck. They can be helpful keys as you examine the cards and learn their significances.

Symbol	Meaning
Circle	Wholeness, unity, protection, continuity
Square	Divine feminine, earth or water elements
Triangle	Trinity, three-dimensional existence, movement
Downward triangle	Divine feminine, earth or water elements
Upward triangle	Divine masculine, fire or air elements
Star	Hope, promise
Five-pointed star	Protection, the human body, physical incarnation
Six-pointed star	Union of male/female or earth/sky, integration
Vertical line	Movement, heaven, sky, masculine energy
Horizontal line	Stability, earth, feminine energy
Cross	Union of male/female or earth/sky, integration
Spiral	Life energy, renewal, movement toward center
Sun	Clarity, vitality, optimism, contentment
Moon	Secrets, intuition, emotions, feminine energy
Rose	Love
Mountain	Challenge, vision, achievement
Ocean/water	Emotions, the unknown depths of the psyche
Snake	Transformation, hidden knowledge
Egg	Birth, fertility
Rainbow	Renewal, hope, happiness
Book	Knowledge
Lantern	Guidance, clarity, hope
Bridge	Connection, harmony, overcoming difficulty
Tree	Knowledge, growth, protection, strength

When studying the symbolism in the Tarot, remember that your own responses and interpretations are what count most. Cars suggest movement and freedom to most people, but if you were in a serious auto accident when you were young, cars may represent pain or danger to you. Trust your own instincts and intuition. After all, your Tarot deck and your subconscious are attempting to communicate with you, and they will do it in imagery that you can understand.

On a More Personal Level

Tarot decks can also contain their creators' personal symbols. These images may or may not mean the same thing to you as they do to their

designers or to another person using the cards. Flexibility is part of what makes the Tarot so fascinating.

TAROT TALK

Daily silence experienced in humility and fervor as an indispensable exercise in spiritual nourishment gradually creates within us a permanent state of silence. The soul discovers in such a silence unsuspected possibilities. It realizes that life can be lived at different levels.

—Pierre Lacout in *God Is Silence* what makes the Tarot so fascinating.

Perhaps the artist is attempting to get you to stretch your imagination by presenting you with new or atypical pictures. The noted and eclectic artist Salvador Dali repeats individual symbols such as a forked stick on some of the cards in his deck, as well as omitting or altering some familiar imagery entirely. The World card in his deck is anything but a pretty picture of joy, harmony, and abundance—possibly because the artist views our world as disturbing and never completely fathomable.

Tarot decks that come packaged with their own books or instructional guides generally explain the significance of the symbols displayed on the cards. Even so, if your own feelings about the pictures on the cards don't coincide with the artist's, give your own responses precedence. And if your interpretations of certain symbols change over time, that's okay, too.

A Path to Personal Growth

Unlock the Doors of Perception

Encoded within the symbols and imagery of the Tarot are keys that can unlock the doors of perception, so that we may see our own lives and the path to higher knowledge more clearly. Many Tarot scholars believe the Major Arcana was designed as a course in initiation, presented in twenty-two stages: the trump cards. But the Minor Arcana, too, is a rich body of information that you can draw upon for personal development.

You could think of both books of the Tarot as containing numerous chapters, one card being equal to a chapter. If you read these chapters in consecutive order, you'll notice a story unfolding. Each numbered card (the Major Arcana cards bear numbers, too) evolves out of the previous one and develops into the following one. In this way, they convey information much as any other course or textbook might.

Whether or not you choose to study the Tarot in this linear fashion, however, is entirely up to you. There's no right or wrong way to seek truth, and as the old axiom states, all paths lead to the same place.

Daily Insights

Many people turn to the Tarot for daily insights. Each morning, you can shuffle your favorite deck, ask for guidance, and draw a single card. Sometimes this card will shed light on a problem, project, or issue you're dealing with in your life. Sometimes it may present the theme for the day. Or it may point to a matter you need to pay attention to. On and off throughout the day, you can think about the card you drew that morning and how it relates to what unfolds during the day. You can even place the card in a spot where you will see it often and reflect upon its meaning, letting its message guide you.

A Truth About Tarot

As you work on specific areas of your life, you'll see your growth reflected in the cards you draw. For instance, you might pick the Ace of Pentacles when you start a moneymaking venture. As the project bears fruit, you might draw the Seven of Pentacles, which shows you are beginning to see the results of your efforts.

It may appear that you're selecting cards entirely at random, but there's nothing arbitrary or chance about it. Your subconscious and/or your Higher Self are presenting information in this elegant way, and the cards you pick each day are never irrelevant.

During particularly significant periods, you might draw the same card again and again over a span of a week, a month, or more. Like a recurring dream, this suggests that the same forces are operating in your life and that you need to keep working on the issues indicated by the card.

Staircase to Understanding: The Major Arcana

It would be hard to find a more appropriate tool for spiritual and personal growth than the Major Arcana. For centuries, seekers have used this body of occult wisdom to access hidden knowledge and to connect with the higher realms. These powerful images portray archetypes that exist within the collective unconscious and that connect you to something larger than yourself. At the spiritual level, each of the Major Arcana cards represents a state of being, or an inner truth about yourself.

The simplest way to understand the Major Arcana in spiritual terms is to think of it as an ascending staircase with twenty-two steps. Each card represents a lesson you must learn in order to move up to the next step. And you have to figure out how to do this yourself; there is no set system.

You can either study the trump cards in consecutive order, or choose individual cards that represent areas or concepts you wish to work on, in whatever order suits your purposes. Or separate the Major Arcana from the entire deck, shuffle, and draw a card for study, letting your inner knowing guide you.

If, for example, you wish to discover the source of inner strength, pick the Strength card. Start by simply gazing at the card, without analyzing it. Let the colors, pictures, and symbols connect with your intuition and reveal

themselves to you gradually, before you begin to examine the images more carefully.

Tricks of Tarot

You can recite this if you want to practice meditating on the Tarot with prayer: Everything that I believe to be true about the Spirit, I understand is also true about myself. Its Goodness is my goodness. Its Power is my power. Its Presence in me is my true self. There is only one True Self.

In her companion book to *The Sacred Circle Tarot*, Anna Franklin suggests you approach the card as if you were going to enter it, like walking through a doorway, and interact with the scenario depicted there. Don't just see the images, try to experience them. Allow your senses to come into play. Feel the sun on your face, the grass under your feet. Witness the murkiness and mystery connected with The Moon or the burning sensation of anger, jealousy, obsession, and fear depicted by The Devil.

Write down what you glean from your study—your insights, awarenesses, questions, impressions, and feelings. Notice how the energies represented by the cards are playing out in your own life—or how you would like to be able to express them. Because the trump cards are quite complex, it's probably best to limit your study to one card at a time, until you understand it—even if it takes several days or weeks.

Everyday Advice: The Minor Arcana

The cards in the Minor Arcana represent everyday concerns and earthly matters. As discussed earlier, the suit of Cups represents the emotions and relationships, Pentacles stand for financial and physical conditions, Swords symbolize mental issues and communication, and Wands are linked with creativity, spiritual considerations, and willpower.

Working on a Specific Issue

Determine which suit covers the issue or situation you wish to work on first. Then, pick the card within that suit that speaks most directly to your objective. For instance, if your goal is to rekindle the love and affection in a romantic relationship, select the Six of Cups from your deck.

Begin by gazing at the card for a minute or two, without attempting to analyze it. Just let the colors, symbols, and so on impress themselves on your subconscious. Note any thoughts, feelings, or insights that arise into your awareness and write them down in your Tarot journal. Each person's responses will be different—and your own responses will vary from day to day—so simply jot down whatever comes to you without censoring yourself, even if it doesn't make sense immediately.

Next, examine the card more closely. Contemplate the symbols depicted on the card to ascertain their meanings. In most storytelling decks, for example, the Six of Cups shows a young man and woman (sometimes a male and a female child) in a pleasant setting—a peaceful village, or a sunny meadow in the country. Their youth is one of the keys to understanding the card—innocence and openness are necessary for love to flourish. The colors are cheerful and bright, signifying optimism. The image is one of generosity, comfort, companionship, and joy. Often the six cups pictured on the card are filled with flowers, a familiar symbol of love. Sometimes the male is portrayed offering one of the cups to the female as a token of affection, which indicates that sharing, giving of oneself, and being receptive—give and take—are essential in any partnership.

What symbols do you see on your own card? Some decks are more symbol-rich than others. What individual and universal meanings do they hold? It may help to make a list of the symbols you notice and your interpretations of them. Continue studying the card you've selected until you've uncovered all the information you feel is relevant at this time. After a day or two, revisit the same card to see if you can glean additional insights from it. If you own more than one deck, examine the same card in each deck. One card may reveal something that was not apparent in another.

Develop Your Sixth Sense, Trust Your Intuition

Your sixth sense is part of who you are. Therefore, your moods, intelligence, education, interests, health, state of mind, past experiences, future aims, and ability to be open to the experiences and the time of day and setting—the “furniture of the mind” as author Willa Cather called it—can all affect how your intuition performs. Some people will naturally be more intuitive than others—psychic ability is like any other skill. And, like any other skill, it will improve with use.

How long it will take is up to you. Much depends on your personal goals, the quality and length of time you invest, individual aptitude, and factors as yet unknown. Sometimes people work diligently for a long time and nothing seems to be happening and then, bingo!—a portal appears. It's like walking along a dull, dreary street and suddenly passing through a gate into a beautiful, flower-filled courtyard hidden behind the facade of a building.

Tricks of Tarot

Using your cards regularly and trusting what they reveal to you, paying attention to your impressions, and noting how the information you glean from the cards plays out in your life will strengthen your psychic “muscles.” In time, your intuition will be automatically activated when you lay out your cards for a reading.

As you learn to trust your psychic responses and let them operate on their own, success becomes automatic. You'll wonder how you ever got along without this valuable skill!

Using the Tarot to Improve Intuition

There are many ways to discover your own inner dimensions. One of the best of these is the contemplation of symbols, and the Tarot is full of symbols. Symbols speak directly to the unconscious. Meditating on the cards' symbols awakens the corresponding archetypal forms embedded in the unconscious, and that in turn allows you to arrive at the right interpretation, to see the truth in the heart of the matter. By reflecting on the deep meanings of the symbols on a regular basis, you set in motion an inward process that will reveal to you truths about yourself and enable you to look outward to grasp Universal Truth.

Other Ways to Develop Intuition

Accessing psychic data is a bit like tuning into a radio station. Sometimes you receive information clearly, at other times there's static. Trust and awareness are essential to developing your intuition. If you are not accustomed to doing internal processing in an aware manner, it may take a bit of time for you to get used to doing so. The important thing is to make a

commitment and follow through on it. Don't expect immediate success, but don't rule it out either.

Tricks of Tarot

If you want to build your predictive skills, try using the cards to predict the outcome of something that you will know tomorrow, such as the winner of a ball game or a political election. Keep track of your hits. Over time, your success rate will likely improve.

Notice coincidences and pay attention to signs. If you observe or experience something out of the ordinary, or with unusual frequency, take note of it. See if it ties into anything else. If any thoughts pop into your head in conjunction with the sign or coincidence, heed them, too.

During meditation, you empty your mind and allow it to be filled by something other than everyday, rational thinking. You relax into a light trance state and invite input from your higher self, subconscious, angels, guides, god, goddess, or whatever term you choose to use. Stilling the mind is easier said than done, however. Some people focus on their breathing, some listen to music, some chant or repeat mantras to quiet their minds. You can also gaze at a meaningful symbol, such as a tattwa or a Tarot card. The objective is to keep your mind and heart open, and to allow insight to flow into your awareness rather than permitting your thoughts to jump about like monkeys in a cage.

Passageway between Material and Spiritual Realms

Meditation on the cards activates your unconscious repository of images; these can be used for spiritual progress. Working with the Tarot opens a passageway between the material and the spiritual realms. The Tarot cards can be read at many levels, for they symbolize your unconscious understanding of your life experience—past, present, and future. From the esoteric point of view, the cards represent all possible experiences.

Greater awareness of your own spiritual dimension and a deeper knowledge of your spiritual self are the rewards for concentrating on Tarot as a means of spiritual development. As one writer has commented, “Tarot

cards are a step forward in our evolution to perfection.” Though absolute perfection may not be possible in this world, in Spirit all is perfect.

A Truth About Tarot

If you are using the Tarot for spiritual development, keep a deck for this purpose only. Don't let anyone else touch this deck. It can be identical to the deck you use for readings, or a different design entirely. What's important is that the images on the cards speak to your higher consciousness.

Track Your Journey with a Journal

As you study the Tarot, it's a good idea to keep a journal. Use a bound notebook or three-ring binder with loose-leaf pages. At the top of each page write the name of a card. Each time you examine the card, date your entry. If you are doing readings, sketch the spread you've used and label each card. (Spreads are explained and demonstrated later.) Add comments about your state of mind, situations in your life, or anything else that you feel may be relevant.

Once you have a journal devoted to your study of Tarot, make a covenant with your Tarot journal. Think for a few minutes about why you are doing this and why you are willing to make a commitment to recording your experiences regularly in your journal. Then put this into words. Study what you have written for a few minutes and see if you are satisfied with your purpose. You may want to make changes. Your statement of purpose might go something like this:

I'm keeping my Tarot Journal for the purpose of getting in touch with my Higher Self, my intuition, and with the aim of generating heightened consciousness. My goal is to become more aware of messages from my sacred mind and to act on this information for my spiritual growth and development. I believe that keeping this journal will aid this process by providing me with a framework in which I can record and

reflect upon my experiences and wherein I can chart my progress.

You are making this agreement with yourself, and it is up to you to keep to the terms you make. Trust your inner self to keep up its part of the bargain.

The Players of the Major Arcana

Introduction to the Trumps

Major Arcana cards represent spiritual or universal forces, higher consciousness, the collective, and archetypes. When they turn up in a spread, they could be considered messages from the Divine. This may indicate that you are being helped or influenced by powers beyond your own immediate everyday awareness, or that aspects of the reading (or the subject of the reading) have implications beyond the obvious, physical ones—even beyond your own personal existence. A spread with many trumps in it shows that the matter is complex and involves different levels of being. It can suggest that to handle the issue, you need to ask for assistance from a higher power and trust that power to guide you.

Some people view the trumps as indicators that fate or destiny is operating with regard to the subject of the reading. To other readers, the presence of Major Arcana cards means you are seeing the results of past actions starting to manifest in your life.

Trump Position

Notice the positions of the Major Arcana cards. Do they appear in the early or past portion of a spread or toward the end or future part? Do they represent opportunities or obstacles? Do they show areas you are aware of or hidden influences? Whenever a trump card turns up in a spread, pay extra attention to it, for it can reveal a great deal.

You will notice as you do readings that shuffling the cards can cause some of them to get turned upside down. When cards appear upside down in a spread, they are said to be reversed. Some readers simply turn reversed cards upright again. Others interpret cards differently when they are reversed than when they are upright.

Importance of Reversed Cards

Much disagreement exists concerning the significance of reversed cards. Many Tarot readers consider a reversed card to be weakened, so that it has less impact than it would if it were upright. Another popular view suggests that reversed cards depict more negative, dark, or malevolent energies at work. In her book *Tarot Reversals*, Mary K. Greer offers an interesting opinion: “Reversals reveal the esoteric or hidden components, the shamanic perspective of the world, and a place known as the dream-time or inner planes versus so-called ‘reality.’” Reversals encourage us to see beyond and through the obvious, and to consider a matter’s underlying dynamics as well as its apparent ones.

Whether you choose to interpret reversed cards in a spread or read only upright positions is up to you. You may wish to work with the Tarot for a while before you decide whether to interpret reversals in a different manner, and if so, how.



The Fool

The Fool is a fascinating figure, yet he can be an ambiguous symbol. Related to the joker of the ordinary playing deck, which is often used as the wild card, he seems beyond ordinary cares and concerns.

In the Waite deck, The Fool is shown standing on the edge of a cliff, about to step off into thin air, yet he gazes upward as if he expects the heavens to support him. He is unconcerned—or unaware—of any danger lying ahead.

Like a hobo, he carries all his worldly possessions tied in a small bag on a stick over his shoulder. He may carry a rose, symbol of love, or a traveler's staff. Often he is dressed in bright colors, and the card's general impression is cheerful and sunny. In some decks he is accompanied by a dog, which symbolizes natural instincts. The dog gambols about The Fool, sometimes pulling him back from the danger ahead, suggesting that our instincts, if followed, provide us with guidance on our life journeys.

Ordinarily, The Fool is shown as a person full of confidence—often the confidence of youth—and trust in the universe. He symbolizes that blind leap of faith that we all must take upon entering the journey of life itself.

Interpretation

When The Fool appears in a reading, it symbolizes embarking on a new way of life. This may involve a physical journey, moving to a new place, starting a new job, or getting married or divorced. Often, the appearance of The Fool indicates a person who is beginning a spiritual path, who has absolute faith in the universe. In such a case, the person has no fear and feels that everything will turn out well. The person may be in touch with the intuitive realm, or she may simply be naive about the future. The Fool represents a state of openness and faith that she'll be supported in her adventure.

Mythologically, The Fool is linked to Dionysus, the early Greek god of sacred revels in honor of the Great Goddess. In medieval courts, the king's fool, or jester, was given license to make fun of everything and everybody with no threat of punishment. His was a special role in a time when simpletons, or fools, were believed to possess divine madness, and irrational behavior was thought to be the result of possession by a god or spirit. The Fool is also associated with the Green Man of the Celt tradition, a god of fertility and Nature's ability to restore itself.

Upright

At this time, you are out of sync with the rest of the world, but in a positive way. You may want to go out on your own, "Full speed ahead and damn the torpedoes." Or you may feel isolated from the group, a loner. Your experience of the current situation is different from those around you—you feel as if you are marching to a different drummer, and you

probably are. Listen to that drummer, for this is the beat of your authentic self, trying to get your attention.

Reversed

The time for independent action may not be right. You must discriminate between your personal fantasies—of going off on an adventure or chucking it all for a new track—and reality. The advice “Don’t quit your day job” may apply here: This is not to say that what you want to do is invalid, only that you must consider all of the pros and cons carefully.



The Magician

The Magician represents worldly wisdom and the power to control unseen forces that operate in human lives. A deeply complex symbol, he is usually depicted as a male figure with the traditional magician’s tools. These tools are the symbols of the Minor Arcana suits: pentacles, swords, cups, and wands.

In the Waite deck, The Magician holds a wand aloft in one hand toward the heavens and divine power, while his other hand points downward to the earth. Above his head floats the symbol for infinity. He knows how to use his tools to connect the two worlds of spirituality, or metaphysics, and the physical plane. At his feet is a garden of roses, lilies, and greenery, representing the plant kingdom.

These symbols tell us that The Magician is in possession of knowledge that enables him to manipulate the material world through aligning it with the spiritual plane, to create the desired circumstances.

Interpretation

The appearance of The Magician in a reading indicates latent powers, yet to be brought into manifestation. Also known as the Juggler, this card suggests that everything in the universe is before us, and if we learn to use them correctly we can manifest the results we desire. It is the task of The Magician to handle them well, to manipulate and control them for beneficent purposes.

The Magician shows us that what we consider to be illusion is another form of reality, and what we consider to be reality can be mere illusion. This is not trickery, but a deep understanding of how we must learn to use our intellects, intuition, and practical skills to mediate between the two worlds.

The Magician is a card of power, for just as a mage stands at the center of the universe with the tools and ability to manipulate it for his purposes, so does each of us create our own universe. This card suggests that we have the ability to control our own lives, that we can manipulate people, things, and events—so long as we go about it the right way and for the right ends.

A Truth About Tarot

The Magician's costume varies with different decks—from Egyptian to Greek to medieval—but he usually wears a belt. In the Waite deck, this is a coiled snake, the ouroboros, or snake biting his tail, an alchemical symbol for wholeness. This represents the power to heal through connecting the two worlds within one's self.

This card is primarily about self-development; as Tarot Arcanum One, it marks the beginning of the road to spiritual enlightenment. We are already able to control our universes, but that we must learn how to reach our goals, whether they are spiritual or mundane.

Mythologically, the Magician corresponds to Hermes-Trismegistus, Egyptian messenger of the gods and guide of souls in the underworld. He has the ability to communicate between the celestial and earthly realms. As a guide, he mediates between our conscious daylight world and the unconscious, hidden recesses of the psyche, often in dreams. The Magician suggests the use of higher intuitive forces, which may appear as a flash of

insight. He can serve as an inner guide who, if we listen carefully, will prompt us to develop our potential.

Upright

This signifies new beginnings and new choices. It indicates someone who is willing and able to manipulate the situation to achieve the desired ends. It suggests leadership potential, ambition, desire for action, and new relationships coming into being. The tools for whatever you desire are already at hand, as is the knowledge for using them correctly—evaluate them and use them properly.

Reversed

Now is not the time for change. Maybe you are not ready internally, or are not fully prepared in an external way. New directions are in the making, but patience is required for them to work out properly. You may be experiencing self-doubt about a new venture, or your spirits and vitality may be too low to accomplish your aims. There is no sense in rushing things prematurely. Wait until the time is ripe.



The High Priestess

The High Priestess is a most mysterious card, representing secret knowledge. She symbolizes feminine spiritual power, or the goddess from whom all life comes and to whom all returns.

She is usually depicted as a serene-faced female figure, sometimes seated with a book on her lap. In the Waite deck, this book bears the word Torah,

but in other decks it is merely an open book or scroll that represents the Akashic Records, the divine repository of our lives past, present, and future. Sometimes, she is standing, holding a staff and pointing toward an unseen object in the distance, an indication of something yet to be revealed.

She sometimes sits or stands between two pillars, which represent the dual nature of our world: good and evil, light and dark, positive and negative. She promises reconciliation of these opposites to those willing to follow the spiritual path of understanding universal law. In the Waite deck, The High Priestess sits at the doorway to the temple, as if welcoming students to enter and learn her secrets. However, the crescent moon at her feet warns of the danger of releasing higher knowledge to those unprepared to handle it.

On her breast, The High Priestess wears a cross, symbolic of the four elements—Fire, Earth, Air, and Water—held in balance. She wears a crown depicting the three lunar phases that symbolize the three stages of womanhood: maiden, mother, crone. This particular card is reminiscent of the Egyptian mother goddess Hathor, who wears a similar headdress.

Interpretation

When The High Priestess appears, she indicates that something hidden, or interior, is preparing to come forth or that you need to pay more attention to your inner world of dreams, imagination, and intuition. She advises you to develop awareness of your night side, so to speak, as well as the daylight personality. Usually, the person realizes the importance of developing this part of his life but may have been holding back out of fear or inertia.

The High Priestess may indicate that the person is attempting to hide something that needs to be revealed.

Psychologically, the underworld refers to the unconscious. In this twilight realm, of which dreams are a component, we encounter our inner selves through intuition and fantasy. The High Priestess represents our potentials that have yet to be discovered and brought forth—our secret selves longing to be recognized.

The High Priestess is linked to the Egyptian goddess Isis, queen of the intellect, in her veiled form. Isis understands fully the workings of the universe and is familiar with both the upper world and the underworld,

where her husband Osiris reigns. She knows the secrets of regeneration after death, of the transformative powers inherent in secret knowledge.

Upright

You are experiencing awareness of the invisible world, where inner change takes place before it manifests in the outer, material world. Your attunement to these inner, invisible sources is acute now, and you are in a position to take advantage of this. You may want to remove yourself, literally, from your day-to-day life to go deeper into your inner core. Tune in to your inner voice and spiritual awareness.

Reversed

Something within you is seeking recognition. You may have been neglecting your inner needs, although at a deep level you are aware that something is stirring. You may be tuning in to yourself in a very private way, not wanting others to know about this. Those around you may notice that you seem vague, or not quite yourself. Ignore them. You are in the process of finding your own way into your inner world and the riches it contains.



The Empress

The Empress is a card of beauty and creativity, the matriarch incarnate, symbolic of the Universal Mother. She represents the feminine in the maternal role: procreation, nurturing, the security and comforts of home, and domestic harmony.

The Empress is a mature female figure, often seated on a throne. In some decks, she is shown standing in a field, surrounded by flowers and vegetation representative of Mother Nature and her harvest. Full-breasted and sometimes pregnant, she symbolizes fruitfulness and abundance.

As a symbol of The Empress's royal position, she sometimes holds a scepter and wears a crown. In many decks, a shield or coat of arms leans against her throne. In the Waite deck, this is heart-shaped and bears the astrological symbol for Venus, planet of love, beauty, desires, and pleasure—the quintessential traditional feminine symbol.

Interpretation

When The Empress appears, a strong feminine energy is at work. As both a mother figure and representative of the traditional female role, The Empress is a creative force that works for harmony. She brings disparate things together, reconciling differences, like a mother running a household must do. This is a card of emotional control and congeniality.

The Empress also refers to the person's emotional and physical resources—for nurturing, healing, feeding, and supporting other people. Often, there is a situation in the person's life where love and nurturing are required—sometimes by the person herself, sometimes by others. This card may refer to the way the person was mothered, for the first and most significant relationship you form is with your mother, and this relationship has a direct bearing on all subsequent relationships.

A Truth About Tarot

As a female authority, The Empress may signify, depending on her place in the spread, the person's need to become a female authority, especially if the person is a woman. In a man's reading, she indicates that he needs to recognize the feminine component of himself and acknowledge its power to unite opposing forces.

The Empress is linked to all of the mother goddesses of antiquity, but especially to Greek Hera, the wife of Zeus and the quintessential matriarchal maternal figure. She is called Juno by the Romans. As a primary symbol for feminine fertility, she is associated not only with

Demeter, Ceres, and all the Pagan mother-goddesses, but also with the Christian Virgin Mary.

Upright

You are in a position of nurturing someone else, or several others. You could be caring for children or the sick, or being supportive of a spouse or friend in need. This card could also refer to a pregnancy, or the desire for a pregnancy. It is appropriate for you to be nurturing now, for you have the inner strength and the ability to do so without depleting yourself.

Reversed

It's time to nurture yourself. You may have been spending too much time caring for others (or you may have recently had a child whose demands have worn you out). You need to take time out for yourself instead of neglecting your own needs. This is a call for self-love, balance, and the awareness that you deserve the same care and attention you give to your loved ones.



The Emperor

The Emperor is a figure of supreme authority, as his title suggests. He is usually shown seated on a throne, sometimes flanked by animals. In the Waite deck, these are ram's heads, symbolic of masculine power. He wears robes over a full suit of armor, holds a scepter in the shape of the Egyptian ankh, and is crowned elaborately. In some decks, his shield, bearing the symbol of the imperial eagle, leans against the throne. He is clearly a figure

to be reckoned with. Often he appears outdoors, against a backdrop of mountains, another reference to worldly power. His age and position of authority speak of experience and wisdom gained. Although he is depicted as a warrior, his attitude is one of the beneficent ruler.

While at rest, The Emperor's attitude suggests he is willing to fight for what is right and what is his duty to protect. He is the executive, or leader, who has reached the summit of authority and achieved worldly power. He is the builder in the material world who strives to make constructions of lasting value and importance. Thus, The Emperor is a father figure, who lays down the ideals, morals, and aspirations for the entire family to follow.

Interpretation

When The Emperor appears in a reading, look for issues related to authority. Although The Emperor represents worldly power and wisdom, he is not simply a figure who gives commands to others. He understands that peace requires a willingness and ability to defend it. "The price of freedom is eternal vigilance."

A Truth About Tarot

The Emperor is related to Zeus, the father-god of the Greek pantheon. The Romans called him Jupiter; the Norse called him Thor. All these deities were known for throwing thunderbolts, or lightning. In some decks The Emperor carries lightning instead of the ankh.

The Emperor teaches the meaning of power and how to use it in this world. Though not overtly aggressive, he tells us that it is necessary sometimes to take up arms against evil forces. As a protective male force, especially of the home and of domestic harmony, he personifies the ideal that what is worth having is worth fighting for.

The Emperor in a reading can also indicate issues concerning the biological father, or authority figures in general. The time has arrived to become the authority figure, rather than depending on others to provide protection. The Emperor often appears when the person is struggling to achieve independence, become his own person, and reconcile father issues.

When The Emperor appears, the individual's real father may have recently died or may die soon, a situation that can bring up feelings of being

abandoned by a protective father figure. It's also possible that someone in the person's life is acting as a father figure, perhaps a boss or a husband. Whether this is positive or negative will be indicated by the placement of the card in the layout.

From a Pagan perspective, he represents the Horned God who always accompanied the Great Mother Goddess. As consort to The Empress, he symbolizes parenthood and masculine creativity.

Upright

This indicates that you are involved with the established order, or with someone who represents the establishment. You may have a need to identify with a powerful group—religious, ideological, intellectual, economic, or political—and to be one of them. Or you may be associating with someone else who has this need.

Reversed

You may be in conflict with the established order—at your job or with your family, religion, or ethnic group. Perhaps you feel pressured to accept responsibilities you don't want, or don't feel capable of handling. You may have recently experienced a loss of power, or you may lack the energy required to reach your goals. A need for more experience, drive, or improved health could be indicated.

The Hierophant

The Hierophant is a figure with authority and power, like The Emperor, but The Hierophant's power is of a spiritual nature whereas The Emperor's is temporal. Often, he is shown as a religious leader. Some decks title him The Pope. He is usually seen seated on a throne, dressed in priestly raiment, crowned, and holding a scepter. His implements will vary according to the religious theme of the deck.



His scepter symbolizes the three worlds—the physical, the astral, and the etheric. His free hand is held aloft in a position of blessing. Acolytes may stand before him, deferring to his wisdom and understanding as a representative of religious authority. He contains within himself the wisdom of a spiritual calling, and like The High Priestess, The Hierophant frequently sits or stands between two pillars, which signify the duality of matter and spirit.

In this role, The Hierophant can be seen as a teacher of the sacred Mysteries. He is responsible for making spiritual decisions for others and for blessing them. The Waite deck shows two crossed keys below him, representing the intellect and intuition. Unlike The High Priestess, whose world is internal and ephemeral, The Hierophant's influence, though of a spiritual nature, is of this world, achieved through conscious choices made on an intellectual basis.

Interpretation

The Hierophant suggests that the person has chosen a religion or philosophy by which to guide his or her life. Sometimes the card indicates disentangling yourself from such an association.

The Hierophant symbolizes any organized institution—be it religious, philosophical, educational, spiritual, or temporal—that exerts authority over its followers or participants, a kind of mind control. Such groups often insist that their way is the only way, that theirs is the ultimate truth.

When The Hierophant appears, a choice is being presented. At this stage of your spiritual development, you are challenged to remain a follower or to

break out and find your own individual truth. The Hierophant asks, will you continue to depend on an outside authority, or will you learn to think for yourself ? The answer is yours alone, but what you decide will affect the rest of your life.

A Truth About Tarot

As a spiritual teacher whose task is to connect the world of humans with that of the gods, to forge a link between the material and spiritual worlds, The Hierophant is a pontifex, an ancient word that meant maker of bridges, and that is used to designate a priest.

The Hierophant is linked in myth to the Centaur, or Chiron, teacher of Apollo, the sun god and healer. Half man, half horse, the Centaur represents the quest for meaning in life. The Centaur is a teacher figure who guides the spiritual seeker to find a connection or bridge between the two worlds—the inner and outer, the material and spiritual. The Hierophant’s understanding goes beyond organized religion and is based on the truth of the inner world of the psyche.

Upright

An authority is active in your life, whether it is a religion, a philosophy, a social organization, or other group. You feel a great deal of loyalty to this tradition or group and choose to live in accordance with the beliefs you share with it. You may aspire to become a leader, or you may have a close relationship with the leader. There may also be a judgmental quality involved. Sometimes this card can suggest challenges or limitations of a spiritual nature.

Reversed

You may wish to overthrow an old tradition—religious, ideological, intellectual, or cultural—that you feel is suffocating you or simply no longer serves your needs. You choose to live by whatever philosophy resonates with your true nature. You want to direct your actions your own way, even if this puts you in conflict with some established tradition. Perhaps your faith is being challenged in some way and you must reevaluate tenets heretofore taken for granted.

The Lovers

One popular image on The Lovers card shows a young couple with an angel-like figure above them. The angel's wings spread out over them, its hands are held above their heads in a gesture of blessing. The Waite deck depicts them as Adam and Eve, standing respectively before the Tree of Eternal Life and the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. Imagery in other decks suggests choice is involved as well as the possibility of union.



Some decks include three people, as if the third party—who might be another young person or an older parental figure—were an influence in their relationship. In decks where three figures are shown, a winged, cupid-like figure on a cloud may appear and point an arrow in the direction of one of the women.

Interpretation

Although many readers interpret this card as representing romantic love, it is allegorically a statement about a union of opposites, whether between two people or within ourselves. The Lovers refers to discrimination in making choices. The male and female figures are symbols not only of human love but also of the dual nature within ourselves. We all have opposing traits and inner dichotomies that need to be reconciled. Partners often experience conflict that requires making choices.

When The Lovers card appears, it points to the need to heal a rift. Although it can herald a romantic involvement, it most often turns up when a critical life decision must be made, sometimes in connection with a love

relationship. This card suggests that you are at a crossroads. You have to consider all of the ramifications of the situation and choose carefully to further your own development and to accommodate the needs of others in the situation.

Tricks of Tarot

In decks that show one young man and two young women on the Lovers card, the implication is that he must choose between them, another indication that this card is as much about choice as it is about partnership.

In mythology, The Lovers card reflects Eros, the son of the goddess of love and beauty, Aphrodite. Eros was named Cupid by the Romans, and it is his job to shoot the arrows of love, which was considered a form of madness, at unsuspecting youths. Eros was often depicted blindfolded to show that love is blind. But Eros has another role—to guide us toward our true destiny, which is to say, “Do what you love and everything else will follow naturally.”

Upright

This is a card of cooperation, of working together with others to accomplish joint purposes. It stands for attraction of any kind, not only the romantic variety, and for any venture requiring harmony, union, and cooperation. A choice between two factors of equal worth may be required, but the choice you make will be the right one. Two or more forces or people may have come together in your life in pursuit of a common goal. This may be a temporary conjunction for some specific purpose or it might be a long-term relationship.

Reversed

Your own disparate parts are cooperating with each other, and warring factors of your personality are coming together. You might realize you can be beautiful and brainy at the same time, or strong and gentle simultaneously. Whatever the case, you are resolving conflict and melding differences into a system of mutual support for yourself. Sometimes this

card indicates a delay of some project that needs mutual cooperation or that you are trying to force cooperation among basically incompatible elements.

The Chariot

The Chariot is usually depicted as a strong male figure holding the reins of two Sphinx-like beasts, one black and one white. Sometimes the beasts are unicorns or other mythical creatures. The charioteer is fully armored and carries a scepter suggesting royalty or that he is in the service of royalty. In some decks, he wears a belt and a skirt decorated with zodiacal glyphs, symbolic of time. On his shoulders are crescent moons indicating emotional factors and unconscious habit patterns that need to be changed.



In some decks, the charioteer holds no reins—he uses sheer willpower to keep his steeds moving forward. The beasts pulling the chariot signify opposing forces, the charioteer represents mastery of these forces and control over inner conflicts. This card suggests that before taking on outer enemies or obstacles, it is essential to stop fighting yourself. The Chariot is a symbol for the self and its direction, as is any vehicle, such as an automobile, that appears in a dream.

Interpretation

When The Chariot appears, there is a need to control competing forces, whether these are inner conflicts, people, or a situation in your life. Like the celebrated but seldom achieved bipartisanship of government, the solution to the problem at hand is to take the middle road between the conflicting elements.

You may feel unequal to the challenge, but if you just go with the flow and make the best of where it takes you, you will succeed. Once you have resolved the conflict within your own mind, you will be able to move forward. To do this, you need firm resolve—self-mastery. With clear thinking and a sense of purpose, you can overcome all obstacles.

The Chariot in a reading is generally favorable. It indicates you have the means to triumph over all obstacles and stay the course you have set for yourself. It can also mean that assistance is on the way. It may suggest you are in the process of transforming yourself and your ways of thinking and behaving to create a firm foundation from which to pursue your desires. At this time you are keenly aware of how to use your past experience to reach a goal and you are in touch with deep inner resources.

At a literal level, The Chariot relates to travel and transportation; therefore it can mean buying a new car or taking a trip.

The Chariot is related to the myths in many cultures. Helios, the Greek sun god, drove a chariot of fire across the heavens. In the Hindu culture, the Lord of the World drives his chariot along the road of time. In ancient Rome, the god of war, Mars, was depicted triumphantly riding to victory in his chariot. These mythic images suggest that the charioteer has triumphed over all conflicting forces, found his true path in life, and is now being guided by intuition and a clear sense of purpose.

Upright

Victory is assured! Things are moving fast. In this situation you are completely, totally involved, and happily so. Whatever task is at hand can be accomplished. Though the pace is faster than usual, you are attuned to the rhythm of it and the changes that are happening—at your job, in a relationship, or in some community or worldly involvement. By uniting the yin and yang sides of your personality, you keep things going in the right direction.

Tricks of Tarot

The wheels of the chariot signify the ever-changing life cycles. The animals are pulling in opposite directions, and the charioteer is holding the reins taut to keep the beasts in tandem—a symbolic statement of the need to master and reconcile conflicting forces, both inner and outer.

Reversed

When The Chariot is reversed, the changes and transitions are happening internally, albeit at a rapid rate. Things are moving so fast that you may feel out of control and struggle to keep your head above water. It may seem that you are being pulled in two directions at once and are stressed out by the pressure. Choose a direction carefully and accept the process of inner transition as a positive one, but be clear about your direction in life. The more you can tune in to your own transition process, the more control over it you can exert.

Strength

The Waite and Grey decks show Strength as number Eight; many other decks, however, show Justice as Eight and Strength as Eleven. This book follows Waite's ordering of the cards.



Many decks depict Strength as a woman in relationship to a lion. Some writers see this as a struggle, but often there does not appear to be any conflict. In fact, she seems to be controlling the lion and may even appear affectionate toward him. Because the woman—or man in some decks—is bare-handed, inner strength that requires no weapon is indicated.

In the Waite deck, the woman bends over the lion in a gesture of gentleness, closing his jaws as if she expects no resistance to her touch. In other decks, she caresses the lion, rides atop him, or stands beside him.

Although many interpreters view this card as emblematic of the struggle with one's animal nature, others see it as symbolic of self-confidence and inner strength. Though the lion is clearly the more physically powerful of the two, the woman represents human courage and willpower that masters the instinctive realm not by force, but by cooperation.

Interpretation

When Strength appears in a reading, you are exhibiting moral courage and fortitude. You have learned to work with your own instinctive nature, to listen to it and hear its whisperings. As in tales of the hero's journey, the seeker often meets with animals, representative of the instinctive realm, who guide and help him on his way. You have come through difficulties and learned to rely on inner strength to solve your problems.

A Truth About Tarot

Strength relates to the Pagan goddess known as the Lady of the Beasts, who possessed understanding of the ways of nature. In ancient times, this goddess reigned supreme. Later, she was personified by the Romans as Diana, goddess of the hunt.

This is a time when faith in yourself will pay off. Your position is strong because you have made yourself strong through suffering trials and tribulations without being defeated. It is a time to let people around you know who you are—especially anyone who has been dominating you.

The indication is that the feminine principle does the work of reconciling the mental-rational faculty with the intuitive-instinctive nature. The feminine is always in closer touch with nature than the masculine. We do not conquer our animal natures by brute force, but by gentleness and feeling our way into rapport with the instinctive side.

Depending on the placement of the card in the spread and the question being asked, Strength indicates that what is required is for spiritual strength to replace or overcome physical strength.

Upright

You have come through severe trials and triumphed. You have found your deep inner strength, and it will see you through whatever comes your

way. You are firmly connected to the instinctual world (represented by the lion), able to make friends with it and control it. Your positive connection to your animal self will protect and care for you. Your inner drives are in harmony with your outer needs, and your instinctive nature supports all that you do or hope to do. At this time, logical analysis—if it is in conflict with your intuition—is not as important as what you feel to be right for you.

Reversed

You are struggling to gain your own in a difficult and potentially harmful situation. As a result, your inner, instinctive nature is calling you to pay attention to your own needs instead of following the dictates of others. It is a time of travail, but you will eventually overcome the difficulties and come out on top. Others may think you are behaving in a way that seems illogical or contrary to what is generally accepted. Regardless, your basic instincts of survival say this is a time for expressing your individuality.

The Hermit

The Hermit is a guide figure represented as an old man, often bearded, holding a lighted lantern aloft in one hand and a staff in the other. He is usually dressed in the long robes of an anchorite or monk, plain and unadorned except for, in some decks, a knotted or tasseled cord around the waist. He radiates the wisdom of the archetypal elder figure.



The Hermit is generally shown standing, sometimes walking, looking ahead at what only he can see—your future. This ancient one now functions as a teacher and guide. Mountains in the distance suggest he has reached the

heights and returned to earth to assist us in our development. He is wise in the ways of all the worlds, visible and invisible, material and immaterial.

The Hermit is linked to Father Time, or Saturn—the planet that symbolizes boundaries and limitations, the obstacles and lessons that appear on everyone’s life course. His solitude suggests the periodic need to withdraw from the everyday world to regain perspective through silent reflection.

Interpretation

When The Hermit appears in a reading, it can mean that a guide figure is at hand, offering help. The querent must make an effort to connect with this guide or consciously begin a search for the truth. A second interpretation is that the querent must voluntarily withdraw from contact with the outer world to do some soul-searching. Spirit cannot speak to you if you are distracted by the noise of everyday life.

The time has come to reunite with the Source, whether for guidance or inner balance. Sometimes, the guide figure may represent a person, such as a counselor of some sort—a therapist or clergy person—but usually it refers to inner guidance, or getting in touch with a guide from the other side.

The Hermit is linked to Uranus and Cronos, the god of time. The myth of these two fathers—both deposed by their sons because they refused to face up to the facts of their inevitable ends—warns us to accept the reality that all must grow old and die for new life to emerge. The death may not be a physical one but the shedding of life-denying ideas that serve as limitations on the Spirit, that we may renew ourselves in rebirth.

A Truth About Tarot

The Hermit travels alone, a seeker after truth, lighting the way for those who follow. He needs no trappings of rank or royalty, wears no adornment, and carries no baggage. His goal is to search and to show others their true direction. His wooden staff symbolizes his connection to the forces of nature and the instinctual realm.

Upright

The Hermit waits patiently for you to turn to him for advice. You may be aware of his influence, but are ignoring it. At this time, you might be looking for guidance from the invisible world. You may be isolating yourself in some way, seeking solitude, wisdom, and inner peace. You want to gain perspective on your life, and you are open to the inner guidance that is available to you.

Reversed

Keeping busy can be a form of denial. You have been putting off giving yourself the solitude you need to sort out your life and the issues you are confronting. It is time—or long past time—for you to engage in self-evaluation, to reflect on your aims and goals, associations, relationships, career, and life path. You may want to withdraw to think things through; stop avoiding it.

The Wheel of Fortune

Invariably, The Wheel of Fortune card shows a wheel—often with eight spokes, a reference to the eight Pagan holidays that mark the ever-turning cycles of life, death, and rebirth. The Wheel is also a symbol for the sun’s path across the sky. Human or mythical figures may also be attached to the wheel, signifying that everyone is tied to the wheel of karma.



The Waite deck shows a sphinx holding a sword at the top of the wheel, calmly watching as the wheel revolves. Around the wheel are letters “Rota,” a reference to the “Royal Road of the Tarot.” The ascending figure on the right is a jackal-headed man, called Hermanubis, who is known for

keen eyesight. A serpent descending on the left side represents sexual or kundalini energy. Above and below, at the four corners of the card, winged creatures hold open books. These correspond to the bull, the lion, the eagle, and the man, symbols of the fixed signs of the zodiac, Taurus, Leo, Scorpio, and Aquarius respectively.

Other decks show monkeylike figures or people in flowing robes caught on the wheel. Some depict eight young women between the spokes wearing expressions that range from joy to despair. The suggestion is that we are rising and falling through the various life cycles as the wheel turns. Occasionally, the wheel stands alone perhaps decorated with symbols and suspended in the sky. Sometimes a blindfolded woman is turning the wheel.

Interpretation

When The Wheel of Fortune appears in a reading, it means that something has been put in motion over which you now have little or no control. You must accept the action of the forces of destiny and align yourself with their aims. Generally, however, the outcome is considered favorable.

Changing circumstances, usually for the better, will promote your growth and advancement. The Wheel of Fortune is a reminder that every period of intense activity must be followed by a fallow time of rest and inactivity. Where you are in your own personal cycle will be shown by the other cards in the spread. This card almost always heralds good fortune coming as a result of what you yourself have put into motion, whether or not you're aware of what you have done to initiate the process. You may have applied for a new job, met a new person, begun a romance, decided to take a college course, or had a chance encounter that got the ball rolling—or the wheel turning. It means a new phase, possibly the need to make an important decision, or even a totally unexpected circumstance developing that will change your life.

Upright

You have done something—quit a job, made travel reservations, begun or ended a relationship, or opted out of a friendship or other situation. Destiny has been set in motion, and all will turn out as it is intended. There's very little more you have to do except to go with the flow. There may be

unexpected turns of events, but they, too, are part of the grand plan for your life. This card is the precursor of good fortune.

Tricks of Tarot

The Wheel of Fortune is linked to the three Fates. One spins the thread of life, the second weaves it, and the third cuts it. Thus, The Wheel of Fortune is a reminder of the mysterious cycles of life, death, and rebirth and of the invisible forces that measure them out to each of us.

Reversed

You are holding back your own destiny by refusing to make the necessary changes or take the required actions. This is causing stagnation and frustration. You think you are waiting for the propitious time, but fear of the unknown is blocking you. You may be fantasizing about what you want to do, but you have to take action before anything can happen. You may experience delays because of lack of commitment. Ask the universe to show you the way and fearlessly follow the direction you are given. Quit being wishy-washy and get on with what you already know you need to do.

Justice

The Justice card usually depicts a female figure, robed, sometimes armored and crowned. She holds an upright sword in one hand and in the other perfectly balanced scales.



Unlike the contemporary image of justice as blindfolded, this Justice is open-eyed, suggesting that divine justice rather than human laws are at work here. She stares straight ahead, suggesting that divine justice is not bound by human limitations and that divine law is not subject to error and bias.

Interpretation

When the Justice card appears in a reading, it can indicate that an actual legal matter is pending or being considered. Whatever the situation, you must weigh many factors to make a reasoned assessment, i.e., judgment, of the matter. The Justice card urges you to seek guidance from your inner self, not to rely solely on human advisors. Also, it cautions prudence and care—deliberate calmly and carefully before taking action.

If other people are involved, consider their points of view, for issues of fairness are paramount now. Legal matters, if a part of the circumstances, should proceed smoothly, fairly, and in a dispassionate manner. Depending on what other cards appear in the spread, a third party could come to your aid and help you get the fair outcome you deserve. This card can also represent anyone involved with the legal profession: a lawyer, a judge, witnesses, law enforcement officers.

Tricks of Tarot

Justice may describe a matter in which some sort of rectification is necessary, where wrongs must be righted, in a spiritual or personal sense, regardless of whether any laws have been broken. This is a card of karma and suggests you are reaping what you have sown. The card may be advising you to become more balanced or fair-minded.

Justice is related to the Egyptian goddess Maat, whose name means truth and justice. She held a pair of scales upon which she weighed the newly dead person's soul against the Feather of Truth to decide if the soul was worthy to pass into the realm of Osiris, god of the underworld.

Upright

You are concerned with external circumstances, waiting for the right time to act. You may be seeking justice in personal or business affairs, or you

may be involved with a lawsuit. In any case, it is important to resolve the situation in a way that is fair to all participants. You must create a balance, not only of power but in terms of your emotional reactions to the situation. This is a time for moderation in all things, for creating harmony to facilitate relationships. You may be called upon to arbitrate for others, or may be subject to arbitration yourself. Your judgment is good at this time, and you are not swayed by personal considerations or bias.

Reversed

Justice in reverse indicates delays in legal matters or unfairness in a situation. If you are the person in power, you may be unduly severe in meting out punishment. If you are in the powerless position, you may be festering with resentment over being treated unfairly. Your equilibrium is out of whack, and you may swing from one extreme to another. The antidote is to balance your own life and become less dependent upon outside influences.



The Hanged Man

The Hanged Man is a tantalizing figure. Usually a male, hanging upside down by one leg, The Hanged Man's expression is serene, as if he enjoys his state. He almost appears to be engaged in a rather bizarre form of meditation or ritual.

In the Waite deck, The Hanged Man hangs from a tree. Its roots are in the ground and the crosspiece that supports him sprouts leaves. Some authorities say this is the Tree of Life itself. Around The Hanged Man's

head is a golden halo, like the rays of the sun. Other decks picture only the horizontal beam, but it too sprouts leaves, showing that it is living wood.

Interpretation

Many writers see The Hanged Man as a card of self-sacrifice and martyrdom, but others view this tantalizing card as voluntary surrender to the process of achieving enlightenment. It may require giving up superficial pleasures and trivial activities in pursuit of a more spiritual way of life. The word sacrifice derives from the Latin *sacra fice*, which means to make sacred. Therefore, The Hanged Man may represent a sacred pursuit.

When this card appears in a reading, the person usually feels called to follow a less materialistic way of life. You are ready for whatever personal sacrifice is needed. You may need to pause momentarily and suspend ordinary activities to more clearly see your spiritual path.

A Truth About Tarot

Often, The Hanged Man signifies going through a major transformation, perhaps caused by illness or some loss. The result has shaken up your old way of life and made you realize that there is more to life than money, material goods, and physical reality.

This card can indicate a need to develop the inner self. You might need to re-evaluate what is and what is not important to you. It may be difficult to let go of old patterns—a relationship, a job, a worldview, a lifestyle—but letting go is essential to your continued growth.

The Hanged Man is related to all of the dying and resurrected gods of mythology. The Norse god Odin voluntarily hung for nine days from the windy tree called Yggdrasil, another form of the World Tree, to achieve knowledge of the runes and magic. In the Pagan world corn gods were sacrificed annually so that their blood, sprinkled on the fields, would produce an abundant harvest. In the Christian tradition, Jesus' crucifixion depicts this sacrifice.

Upright

You are suspended between the past and the future; a new direction for your life is in the making. Look at things from a different perspective and

make necessary readjustments. Readjustment is needed, but the good news is there's no hurry. Take your time and make the right decisions about where you truly want to take your life. Pay attention to your inner development and be prepared to dance to a different drummer in the future.

Reversed

You are at a crossroads, but are at a standstill because you're stuck on the material plane and neglecting your spiritual development. Denying your real needs could be causing depression, dissatisfaction, or apathy. You feel that any effort will be futile. This is because you are not being true to your inner self. You may be sacrificing yourself because of a martyr complex or indecision. It's time to end such behavior and commit yourself to a worthwhile goal that will lead to your higher good, even if it means turning your world upside down.

Death

The Death card tends to frighten people, but despite its grim depiction it symbolizes transformative powers. Many decks picture a skeleton with a scythe, wearing a black hooded robe. The Waite deck pictures Death as a man in black armor riding a white charger, suggesting the perpetual movement of the cycles of life and death.



The knight carries a banner on which is embroidered the mystical white rose, symbol of pure and true love. The rose with five petals represents the five senses of material life combined with the immortality of the heart, or soul. Greeting the knight with hands outstretched in blessing or supplication

is a priest figure wearing a mitered cardinal's hat. Two children look on in awe. In the background, the sun is rising, a sign of resurrection, over a body of water representing the unconscious realm.

Other decks show barren backgrounds; sometimes severed body parts lie about randomly. One deck features the four horses of the Apocalypse riding through a stormy sky.

A Truth About Tarot

Death is related to the Hindu goddess Kali, who wears a necklace of skulls, and to the Greek Hades, god of the underworld, renamed Pluto by the Romans. Death corresponds to the number thirteen, which is the number of lunar months in a year.

Interpretation

The Death card in a reading rarely foreshadows a physical death. Rather it means the end, or death, of a cycle. Whenever a stage in life ends, there is a need for mourning. Trying desperately to hold on to what is clearly over causes trouble. Employing cosmetic means to stave off the approach of age, for instance, is a useless effort to avoid the inevitable. The ultimate message of the Death card is the promise that new life follows disintegration.

Upright

Contrary to the grim illustration, the Death card indicates a transformation for the better. It does not portend actual physical death. Usually, the person is experiencing a metamorphosis of some sort. Patterns you once found workable are no longer effective. The old ways must be destroyed to make room for the new that is coming into being.

Reversed

You are putting off making necessary changes, usually out of fear. You feel that others are standing in your way, but you're really blocking yourself. You're stuck in old habit patterns that you know need to be changed, but you don't want to put forth the effort to alter them even though you are unhappy with the current situation. You may be depressed or in a state of apathy, the result of refusing to accept the necessary process of

psychological death, which leads to rebirth. The way out is to face up to your stagnation, frustration, and unhappiness. Jettison any relationships that aren't working. Throw out the old and ring in the new.

Temperance

This lovely card often features a winged angel. In the Waite deck, the angel stands in a stream bordered by flowers, with the rising sun shining in the background. In most decks, the figure pours liquid—the elixir of life—from a golden vessel into a silver one in a continuous stream, suggesting the interplay of the material and spiritual worlds and the eternal flow of the waters of life. Both the angelic figure and the cups are symbolic references to the feminine principle of cooperation, balance, harmony, receptivity, and creativity.



Interpretation

Temperance, as its name suggests, is about moderation in all things. When Temperance appears in a reading, you are being cautioned to have patience, which may be difficult. However, the circumstances of your situation will teach you to wait calmly when it seems like nothing is happening.

The person who receives Temperance in a reading is not in a position to hurry matters along. The only course is to sit and wait for things to develop in their own time. The trick is to make the waiting constructive. Learning to do nothing mindfully is a milestone on the spiritual path—there are times when nothing can be done and nothing needs to be done.

A Truth About Tarot

The word *temperance* is derived from the Latin *temperare*, which means to moderate, blend, or mix together harmoniously. Interestingly, this card was earlier named Time, which is a key to its underlying meaning.

Temperance is linked to the Moon. Its number is fourteen and on the fourteenth day after the New Moon the lunar orb is at the exact midway point of its monthly cycle.

Upright

You are being asked to blend things in a harmonious way. You are learning to temper your ego needs with the legitimate needs of the spirit within. This is a time of inner growth and outer harmony. With patience, you can unite the disparate elements—whether they are raw materials, resources, personnel, or ideas—into a harmonious whole.

Reversed

Things seem to be stalled. There's not much you can do at the present except to let things work themselves out, which they will in time. Patience is the key, for trying to force matters will cause bad feelings and poor results. This is a time to concentrate on blending the different parts of yourself—psychological, emotional, and spiritual—into a new form. Temper inner extremes that throw you out of balance.

The Devil

Many decks picture a medieval Christian-type devil, complete with horns, hooves, a hairy tail, and a pitchfork. Usually at the devil's feet are two small, humanlike figures, one male and one female, with chains around their necks. However, it is important to note that the chains are loose and the people could easily slip them off, suggesting self-imposed limitations.



The Devil is usually pretty scary looking. The Gilded Tarot portrays him as a muscular young man, whose face is half-hidden beneath a helmet-mask. In some decks, he has an inverted pentagram over his head or on his brow.

The variety of illustrations implies widely differing opinions of the card's meaning. Some designers view the devil as a creature of consummate evil; for others he is a mythical creature. Many psychologically oriented people see the devil as a symbol of human indulgence, ignorance, egotism, greed, and irresponsibility.

Interpretation

Superficially, The Devil appears to be one of the more alarming cards of the Major Arcana. However, he does not represent satanic forces with evil intent. He is the Horned God of Pagan times, connected to the fertility rites banned by the Church, which feared the power of Pagan rituals, especially those involving sexual activity.

When The Devil shows up in a reading, he is telling you to re-evaluate your relationship to material things, which are keeping you chained. It's time to look at whatever is limiting your personal growth, especially abusive, obsessive, or harmful relationships. Confront your fears about financial security and social and material success.

You need to recognize and acknowledge things you don't like about yourself—your personality, body, behavior, or temperament. It's time to let go of old fears, hang-ups, inhibitions, and ways you manipulate others to satisfy your needs instead of taking responsibility for yourself. Often there

is a sexual component involved that may have a harmful effect on your whole life. Or there could be a nonsexual relationship that binds you and that must end before you can grow further.

Whatever the situation, you are the only one who can change it. The two chained figures on the card represent bondage to the material realm. Their loose chains indicate you can attain freedom by relinquishing attachment to the things of this world.

Tricks of Tarot

The Devil is related to the old Pagan god Great Pan, a god of nature and the natural processes of the physical world, including sex. The Greek form of Pan was Dionysus, who cavorted with satyrs and in whose honor uninhibited rituals that included a sexual free-for-all were held annually.

Upright

The Devil represents the bondage that we create and maintain for ourselves. There may be obstacles in the environment that you find frustrating, or you may feel your options are narrowing. Someone else may be involved, but you have the ability to free yourself from the situation by using your willpower.

Reversed

You feel trapped in a situation over which you feel you have no control, but close examination will reveal that your own attitudes and beliefs are causing the problem. Examine your beliefs to learn how they are restricting you. Be careful of any quick fix to your problems, which are structural and not superficial. If you are willing to do the hard work, both on the inner and outer planes, you can achieve success.

The Tower

The Tower usually depicts a stone tower of fortress-like construction, such as those still remaining from medieval times in Europe. The Tower is in the process of falling down or being destroyed, most often by fire or lightning.



In the Waite deck, The Tower's crown is being blown off by the fiery impact. The blast catapults human figures out of the windows. The implication is that the forces of heaven are angry and attacking the structure, causing flaming debris to fly out in all directions.

Interpretation

Like the Death card and The Devil, The Tower tends to alarm anyone in whose reading it appears. But The Tower does not necessarily represent ruin and devastation, although its appearance usually does herald swift and dramatic change— sometimes extremely upsetting change.

The querent has usually brought the situation on herself by ignoring or denying that something needs restructuring or deconstructing. Most likely, she is already well aware of a pressing need to make changes, but refuses to take action. Then along comes a crisis, such as losing a job, getting a divorce, an accident, or financial setback, that forces the person to face reality.

This card signifies the crumbling of an old, outworn structure. Begin to deal seriously with your life collapsing all around you instead of, like the Roman emperor Nero, fiddling while your house burns. You might have to end an unsatisfactory relationship, quit a stifling job, cast off false values, shuck social conventions that limit your progress, or conserve money and live more simply. The querent nearly always knows that she is imprisoned by a self-created fortress, whether for protection, safety, or from fear of facing the unknown.

Destroy the old structures before they destroy you, so you can become free. In the wake of the chaos, a new order will grow. You can pick and choose among the rubble to decide what is worth saving, and from that, rebuild your life in accordance with who you truly are.

Upright

Whatever disruption or adversity The Tower heralds is for the best. The Tower represents overthrowing false ideas and old habit patterns. In this sense, it is not a negative card but a positive one. There may be some kind of loss—personal or financial—but the catastrophic event could have been foreseen if you had been aware and willing to face facts. What is destroyed in conjunction with this card has served its purpose and needs to go.

Reversed

You are refusing to change old habit patterns, and you will suffer continued disruption in the form of unforeseen difficulties until you finally make some changes in your life. You may be confused about just who and what you are. At a deep level, you are being prepared for the changes that must eventually take place, but you are resisting what your inner self knows already. Once you alter fixed beliefs and limited ideas you'll enjoy a new sense of freedom.

The Star

This lovely card usually portrays a nude female figure in or beside a pool of water, pouring from two jugs, one held in each hand. In the Waite deck, she kneels and pours the contents of one pitcher into the stream and the contents of the other into the ground, showing the connection between the two feminine elements: earth and water. The naked woman represents unveiled truth and purity. The jugs she holds contain the waters of life. Some of the water is being returned to the Source, some is being used to infuse the land with new life.



The background of this card always displays stars. Many decks show seven subsidiary stars, sometimes arranged to reflect a portal, sometimes set in a circle or halo around her. The stars sparkle above a pastoral landscape. The colors are usually bright, often with yellow (the color of optimism) and blue (symbolizing peace) predominating, although some decks depict a nighttime scene.

Interpretation

The Star is a universal symbol of hope. Its appearance can signal the end of the travails represented by some of the earlier cards, symbolizing that a new and happier phase of life is coming. We see shooting stars as harbingers of good luck.

A gate has opened for you to new possibilities. This card portends good fortune, creative inspiration, spiritual growth, help from unseen forces, and wishes come true. It marks a time of fulfillment.

The Star is linked to all the great goddesses of love and beauty from many cultures. The Greek Stella Maris, “Star of the Sea,” was one of the titles bestowed upon Aphrodite. The Romans renamed her Venus. It is Venus who appears to us as the morning and evening star.

A Truth About Tarot

The Star corresponds to the number seventeen, which in old numerological systems was connected with immortality, hope, intuition, and self-expression.

Upright

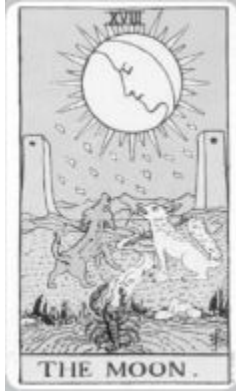
At this time you are experiencing optimism and self-confidence. You feel good about yourself and your place in the universe. You have arrived at a positive place, for which you have been preparing yourself. You are receiving assistance both from the invisible world as well as the material world. Good things are in the offing—money, possessions, love, recognition, or assistance—because you are flowing with the energy of the universe. You trust life's processes and are setting new goals for the future. New opportunities in your career or relationships are opening.

Reversed

When The Star is reversed, you are seeking your own path in a private way, without regard for the outside world. You may feel alone, withdrawn, even resentful of outer obligations at this time. You may recently have experienced some disappointment that has caused you to turn inward. This is a necessary step. You need “repair time,” including silence and solitude to attune yourself with your inner needs and re-energize yourself.

The Moon

The Moon is a magical, mysterious card emblematic of the unconscious and the invisible realm of dreams, imagination, and psychic impressions. Usually the moon occupies the top half of the card, sometimes shown in both its full and crescent phases. In the Waite deck, drops of water fall from the moon, raining down on two canines, a dog and a wolf, who bay at the moon. Two towers, one on either side, reflect a portal. At the bottom of the card is a pond from which crawls a crab (symbol of the astrological sign Cancer, which is ruled by the moon), or crawfish, or lobster. The water suggests the moon's link with the tides, the earth, the emotions, and the unconscious realm.



Some authorities say the animals represent our opposite tendencies—the wolf, the untamed inner animal nature; the dog the domesticated, daily persona we show to the world.

Interpretation

The Moon represents the link between spirit (sun) and matter (earth). The moon symbolizes what we feel and how we respond. Emblematic of all that is instinctive and irrational, the moon affects everything and everyone on earth, from the ocean's tides to the moods and reproductive cycles of humans.

Tricks of Tarot

The Moon card can point to a need to nurture yourself or to care for your health. For artistic people, its presence in a reading may mark a time of increased imagination and creativity.

When The Moon appears in a reading, it suggests that you should pay more attention to your inner self, your lunar self. In its diffuse light, you can often see more clearly than in the glare of the noonday sun. The light of the sun enables you to see the world around you, but the moon illuminates what springs naturally from inside you. Pay attention to your dreams, feelings, instincts, and intuition.

The Moon can also indicate deceit and self-deception, confinement and undoing, but these conditions are usually a result of ignoring your own inner promptings. If you get “taken”—especially emotionally—it's because you let your rational mind override your feelings. The Moon's appearance

also recommends tying up loose ends connected to the past, especially to your mother or other females.

The Moon is the symbol for the Goddess, whose three aspects are depicted in the moon's phases. As the newborn crescent, the moon is the maiden, the virgin—not chaste, but belonging to herself alone, not bound to any man. At the full moon, she is the mature woman, sexual and maternal, giver of life. At the end of her cycle, the waning moon represents the crone whose years have ripened into wisdom.

TAROT TALK

The Moon, as the luminous aspect of the night, belongs to [the goddess]; it is . . . an expression of her essential spirit. [It] appears as a birth—and indeed as rebirth. Such processes are the primordial mysteries of the Feminine . . . from which all life arises and unfolds, assuming, in its highest transformation, the form of the spirit.

—Erich Neumann, *The Great Mother*

Upright

The Moon says that you are perceiving the reality of your inner nature more clearly, becoming more aware of feelings and inner perceptions. The Moon also suggests psychic ability. You can tune in to other people's vibrations because you are connected to the information network of the invisible world. Pay attention to hunches and dreams. This is also a good time to develop your intuitive skills.

Reversed

Your soul is calling for help, trying to get your attention. You may have been ignoring your lunar needs—self-nurturance, artistic expression, and receptivity. The demands of the day—the masculine side—are overwhelming you, and you need time out to reconnect with your feminine side. You have allowed the pressures of the outside world to throw you out of balance, and you feel disconnected from your true self. It's time to rest and reflect.

The Sun

The Sun card features a blazing sun, sometimes with a face. Beneath the Sun, in the Waite deck, a smiling nude child rides a white horse. Behind him, a banner unfurls. In the background, huge sunflowers grow against a stone wall.



Some decks show two children with their arms around each other; other decks picture a young couple holding hands. The child, or children, are clearly very happy. The astrological sun rules children, creativity, pleasure, and the heart. The Sun card represents life itself, for the sun gives life to everything on earth. The Sun suggests vitality, confidence, achievement, ego-attainment, and success in all endeavors. It is emblematic of the proverb, “May the sun shine on all you do.”

Interpretation

Your past work is now bearing fruit, a concept that is symbolized by the child or children on the card. Whether the fruit represented is a biological child or a creative project, the outcome is a happy one. Good things now come into your life: success, achievement, health, good fortune, and happiness.

When The Sun turns up, it brightens any negative cards in the spread. Its influence is always beneficial, suggesting prosperity, enthusiasm, honors, public recognition, and attainment. You are happy to be alive because you feel it is the dawning of a new day. Efforts or ventures will turn out favorably.

The Moon symbolizes the Goddess and feminine principle; the Sun represents the masculine principle.

Upright

Generally considered a positive card, The Sun indicates vitality, confidence, success, and good times. It signifies a time of new beginnings, of things going well, of accomplishment, success, and contentment. You feel cheerful and self-confident, full of life and energy, ready to undertake new projects with enthusiasm. You may be starting more than one project, or upgrading something in your life, such as taking a more satisfying job, remodeling your home, or moving to a sunnier climate.

A Truth About Tarot

The appearance of The Sun in a reading can foreshadow a reward for your previous striving and suffering with “a day at the beach.” The Sun card might indicate you are going to take a wonderful vacation in the sun where you can relax and let go of your worries.

Reversed

All of the above apply to the reversed Sun, because it is never a negative card. However, the reversed position indicates that there will be delays or that you will have to make some adjustments you hadn't planned on. You might have to exert more effort to produce positive results. Now is the time to explore new and more effective ways to express who you are to the outside world.



Judgment

The Judgment card visually seems rather negative. In the Waite deck, a winged figure, whom some call the angel Gabriel, emerges from a cloud and blows a trumpet. Beneath him are several nude figures looking up, hearing the trumpet's blast. Their arms are outstretched, and they seem to have risen from coffins or the earth itself.

Of all the allegorical symbolism of the Major Arcana, this is the most purely Christian, suggesting the feared Day of Judgment, when God will judge all souls and apportion out rewards or punishments accordingly. However, this is not a totally Christian idea; the Egyptian goddess Maat, for instance, weighs the soul against her Feather of Truth.

Whatever the viewpoint, the symbols on this card suggest an awakening.

Interpretation

When the Judgment card appears, what is awakening is a sense of a higher self within. Sometimes the card coincides with turning away from a traditional set of beliefs toward one that better suits your personal philosophy of life. Judgment represents the end of an old way of life, a cycle that is finished. It is a time to seek a new direction, to make adjustments that reflect who you truly are.

Tricks of Tarot

Judgment relates to the Greek Hermes, called Mercury by the Romans. The deeper expression of Hermes-Mercury's role as messenger of the gods is that which mediates, or delivers messages, between the conscious mind and the unconscious realm.

Generally speaking, this is a positive card symbolizing regeneration and rebirth after a period of confusion and confinement (shown by the coffins). You may have felt "dead" in your old life. When Judgment appears, you have the unique opportunity to enliven yourself and your environment by making the appropriate changes. It's a time of freedom to be yourself.

Upright

You've had a wake-up call from the universe and are now ready to step into a new phase of your maturing process. Your life is fairly settled now, and you are letting things grow at a steady pace, without hurrying the

process. A new phase in your life is coming into being as the natural result of your maturity—like a tree that has gone through the flowering stage bears fruit as the product of its maturity. You may get important news that will prove beneficial, or you may acquire new knowledge that will bring you joy and a sense of fulfillment. Health improves, and problems are easily solved.

Reversed

Interior factors are at work, and you have little or no control over them. You may be thinking about making some changes, which are being signaled by these inner timing mechanisms. Emotionally, you may be called upon to grow up. You aren't sure just how to handle what's happening. Nonetheless, you are facing a new phase in life and must make peace with it. Judgment reversed can also indicate frustrating delays or postponements, possible loss or separation, and the need to cope with life changes.

The World

In many decks, The World card shows a young woman, sometimes nude or wearing a long scarf that covers her genitals. In each hand, she holds a double-ended wand that points both upward and downward, suggesting, "As above, so below." In the Waite deck, she is surrounded by an oval-shaped wreath.



The four corners of the card feature a bull, a lion, an eagle, and a man—representing the four fixed signs of the zodiac: Taurus, Leo, Scorpio, and Aquarius. These elemental figures also depict the four directions. In the

Waite deck, the wreath is bound at the top and bottom by ribbons in the shape of the infinity symbol.

Interpretation

This is the last card of the Major Arcana. It represents balance and support by unseen forces and symbolizes the end of the spiritual journey begun with The Fool. To embark upon the spiritual journey is to invite unseen forces to interact with us. These creative energies manifest in many ways, and often serve as guides. You are entering a place of great powers and, sometimes, great secrets: the realm of the sacred. To interface with this world is to be impacted in a way that is life-changing. Here you connect with supreme power—not the power of the material world but of the invisible order that supports and nourishes our world and our lives.

When The World card appears in a reading, it is a signal that you have been guided to the successful conclusion of your spiritual journey. At this, the final stage, you will receive what is rightfully yours because you have earned it. You feel whole, complete, refreshed from your long journey and ready to begin anew at a higher level.

Upright

Success in all endeavors is assured. Everything is available to you and all is right with the world. Whatever you do now will prosper—a career change, a move to another place, a new relationship, recognition, rewards, acclaim. This is the end of an old cycle and the beginning of a new one. You have mastered the complexities of your inner nature and feel supported by your inner resources. This is a time of supreme self-confidence and victory. You have put your trust where it belongs—in a Higher Power—and you will reap the rewards. Many possibilities and opportunities are available to you, and you are free to choose what pleases you.

Reversed

You are being presented with a multiplicity of choices and aren't sure which one to make. You may be experiencing new facets of yourself or investigating different levels of reality. Or you may be rejecting new ideas being offered out of fear or a limited understanding. Now is the time to face

the fact that the universe is a more complex place than you have been willing to admit.

Interpreting the Minor Arcana

Introduction to the Court Cards

In medieval times the four suits (usually called Wands, Pentacles, Swords, and Cups) represented the four main classes of people—the nobility, the clergy, the merchant class, and the working class. In today's society, there are correspondences— an elite, or old money, class is the nobility; today's version of the clergy has expanded to include the professions and academia; the merchant class includes businesses and people employed by corporate institutions; and those in blue collar or service positions are the working class.

These suits help us pinpoint the areas of life that need our attention, because each of the suits represents a distinct realm of activity, experience, and personal growth. When many cards of the same suit appear in a reading, it's a clear indication that the person consulting the Tarot is concerned about a particular area of life—or should be. A reading about a relationship will usually turn up several cards in the suit of Cups, whereas Pentacles are likely to predominate in a reading about finances.

What the Suit of Wands Means

The Wands are linked with creativity, drive, energy, enthusiasm, willpower, and outer world activities. They describe attitudes, abilities, and situations that offer the potential for success, perhaps through utilizing your talents and imagination.

Artists and craftspeople, for instance, may find that Wands appear in their readings frequently. Financial achievement may or may not be a factor; self-expression and fulfilling your potential are more important.

Generally speaking, Wands are positive cards. The colors tend to be bright (yellow stands for optimism, red for action) and the designs or scenarios depicted are usually cheerful. Wands may be symbolized as

branches sprouting leaves or flowers, wooden staffs, crude clubs, poles, scepter-like rods, or flaming torches. As representative of the fire element and masculine force, Wands are obvious phallic symbols.

King of Wands

The King of Wands is usually shown as a dignified man, seated on a throne, robed and crowned. Sometimes he wears armor; other times he appears as a prosperous merchant king. A positive and powerful figure, he is clearly in command of the situation, confident and at ease. He holds a full-length staff or rod, generally upright but sometimes leaning against his shoulder. In some decks, this King faces sideways, and whether he is looking toward or away from other cards in a spread will have a bearing on his relationship to the reading.



Upright

Upright, the King represents a man of status and wealth, an influential and independent person who helps those he cares about. He may be a boss, mentor, senior business partner, or advisor. You can rely on his honesty, intelligence, loyalty, and fair-mindedness, and you are sure to get good advice from him. If the King does not represent an actual person in your life, he can refer to a situation, which is exactly as it appears to be with no hint of deception. This card can indicate that good fortune is coming your way, perhaps in the form of unexpected help or advice, good news, a promotion, or an inheritance.

Reversed

The King of Wands reversed indicates delays in a business or creative project; however, nothing really problematic is standing in your way. If the King represents a person, he will be available but won't go out of his way to help you. He won't block your efforts. He may even approve of what you are trying to accomplish on your own and lend moral support. But don't expect overt or tangible assistance.

Queen of Wands

The Queen of Wands is pictured as a statuesque woman of regal bearing. She holds a tall staff in one hand, a symbol of her authority. Often she sits on a throne, robed and crowned, but some decks show her as a well-dressed matron figure.



Upright

Socially prominent, this Queen represents a woman who is in a position of authority and shines in her endeavors. A “lioness”—warm, generous, and loving—she is honorable, creative, intelligent, friendly, and mature. Her advice is well worth taking, and confidante or provide valuable assistance. A natural leader, she may be the head of a business, social, or philanthropic organization, or a political figure. If this Queen does not represent an actual person, she indicates that now is a good time for you to move forward in a business or creative venture. If the Queen represents you, you have the qualities within yourself that you need to succeed.

Reversed

If the Queen of Wands is reversed, she can represent a powerful woman who demands control over your affairs in return for her advice, support, and/or financial assistance. She wants to control social situations for her own advantage. If the Queen does not represent an actual person, the reversed card can be a warning to be careful in any business deals with women. She also advises you to avoid giving offense to the socially powerful, and to be aware of deception, greed, and jealousy.

Knight of Wands

The Knight of Wands is usually depicted as a young man on a rearing horse, in a mode of forward action. He brandishes the wand like a weapon, but it seems more for show than to render a blow. He usually wears a suit of armor that is colorful and ornate. His position indicates that he is riding toward some encounter, more likely a joust than a fight.



Upright

Knights are messengers and travelers, and the Knight of Wands brings good news concerning work or social activities. His glad tidings may relate to almost any anticipated happy event—a journey or vacation, a change of residence or job, an engagement or marriage. If this card represents a specific person, it refers to a young man who is a relative or friend with the same qualities as the King and Queen, who are his parents in the royal family. The person bearing the message can be trusted and is faithful.

Reversed

Even when reversed, the Wands aren't particularly negative, but the reversed Knight can indicate a delay in a message or paperwork you have been expecting. A trip may be canceled because of bad weather or an engagement or wedding postponed, even broken off. The reversed Knight can represent separation from people, places, or situations.

Page of Wands

The Page of Wands shows a youth, generally facing sideways and holding a tall staff before him with both hands, perhaps leaning on it. His attitude is expectant but casual. He wears garb similar to that of the rest of the royal court, but because he is a youth he may wear short pants. Some contemporary decks depict the Page as a girl or an androgynous figure.



Upright

The Page of Wands represents a message of importance to your current project or situation, usually affecting work although it may be of a social nature. The information is positive. If the card represents a person in your life, it could be a younger relative or friend, an apprentice, student, or assistant. This Page is an enthusiastic adventurer and may be interested in international travel, foreign cultures and people, the arts, or philosophic projects.

Reversed

When reversed, the Page of Wands represents a delay, which could cause trouble. Something you were expecting might not arrive on time or a mix-up may occur. Or the Page may bring a message of unwelcome news that

causes some disruption in your life or requires you to travel to put things right. If this Page represents a person, he is untrustworthy or conveys false or misleading information. Be on guard.

Ace of Wands

The Ace of Wands in the Waite deck shows a hand emerging from a cloud, firmly grasping a heavy yet elegantly shaped stick that is vaguely phallic in design. Out of the wand, or club, new shoots sprout. The disembodied hand holds the Wand so that it points upward. Some decks picture only a wand, often one that is large and elaborate, like a ruler's scepter or a magician's ceremonial tool.



Upright

This Ace indicates the beginning of an enterprise, usually involving business, the arts, or finance. It shows that you have planted the seeds for a new birth—possibly a creative or moneymaking idea. You are now free from restraints that have hampered you in the past, able to express yourself successfully, take on a new role, or forge a new identity through your work.

Reversed

The Ace of Wands reversed indicates that the process of creating a new identity or the start of a new endeavor has not yet manifested. It's still in the planning stages. You may experience delays, or you might have to rethink your plans and make adjustments. You have a sense of your potential to do something new but might hesitate because of lack of resources or confidence.

Two of Wands

The Two of Wands is an ambiguous card. It shows that a second, perhaps unexpected, factor is entering into the situation at hand, something for which your plans have not allowed. There is an element of surprise. Sometimes this card indicates a choice must be made, which could be related to your work or a creative endeavor.



Upright

You are saying “Yes” to a new enterprise with the expectation that you will achieve ownership, wealth, and good fortune. You’ve started something and are awaiting results. You may, however, have to deal with some unforeseen problems or encounter unexpected obstacles and opposition, such as a bank loan not coming through, a partner defecting, or a loss of support you were counting on. Sometimes this card can indicate a need to alter your course.

Reversed

This position suggests you may be in for a surprise, perhaps a nasty one. Whether the surprise element portends good or bad will be indicated by the surrounding cards in the reading. If the Two of Wands appears with a Court Card, for example, it may mean the person the Court Card represents will disappoint you or make an unexpected appearance, which will change the picture.

Three of Wands

The Three of Wands represents someone who is ready and willing to hang on to what he has achieved. You can remain calm and in control of the situation, for there is no need for impulsiveness. This is a time to take things firmly in hand and to act in a mature and responsible manner based on your experience and common sense.



Upright

You have consolidated your situation, business, or enterprise and now can expect financial and/or personal gain. By clearly defining the role you want to play, you present a positive picture to the world. This confident attitude may draw helpful people toward you or attract beneficial circumstances. You've established a solid foundation for your business or occupation and can expect cooperation from others. At this point, you are clear about who you are and what you intend to achieve. Others will respond positively to you.

Reversed

You are doing most of the work on an internal level, clarifying your needs and formulating your sense of direction. You have resolved most of the problems connected to the situation or enterprise and negotiated the tricky bits. Now you can expect things to go smoothly when you do go public with your ideas.

Four of Wands

This is an extremely positive card, indicating that your efforts to establish a project, business, or other endeavor are successful. Your position is secure

and comfortable. Now you can relax and enjoy life. It's a time of respite and rejoicing.



Upright

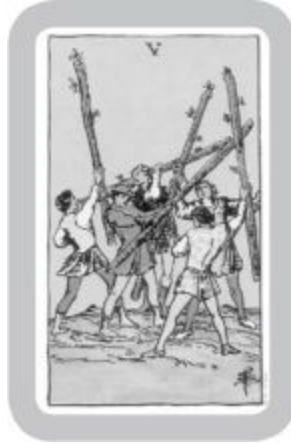
You are enjoying pleasure and prosperity, reaping the rewards you have earned. Your finances are in good shape, and you are in harmony with your environment and the people in it. You've shown the world who you truly are and what you can achieve. It's a time for celebration and good times.

Reversed

The reversed position of this positive card means you are celebrating your good fortune in a quiet way. You may be expanding your property holdings or creative output without fanfare. Financial gains may be more modest than if the card were upright, but you are satisfied with your accomplishments and the sense of having done a job well. Your public image, your relationships, and your sense of self are favorable.

Five of Wands

The Five of Wands is about competition in economic, social, or career areas. It signifies the mad scramble for money and power, success and recognition, with concomitant excesses of greed and corruption. This card represents struggle in the marketplace. It can also indicate that you are involved in ego battles with other people in your workplace or the social arena. Often the image on the card shows five men fighting among themselves, using their staves as weapons.



Upright

New factors moving into the situation demand that you change, adapt, and grow. Life's not as simple as it was. New competition has moved into the neighborhood—or the industry—and you have to put forth more effort to keep what you have gained. Depending on the rest of the reading and how you handle the challenges facing you, you could either suffer hardship and loss or go on to greater success and prosperity.

Reversed

When the Five of Wands is reversed, you must change and adapt to different and difficult circumstances. The new competition may be cutthroat, even dishonest or underhanded. There could be litigation to resolve disputes, and your public image may suffer. Don't get involved in questionable or risky practices at this time and be careful whom you trust.

Six of Wands

The Six of Wands represents triumphing over adversity. A card of victory, it indicates good news and success. You've met the challenges to your position, work, or reputation and come through with flying colors.



Upright

Victory is at hand. You have overcome or conquered the opposition. Past self-doubt has been resolved, and you are in the process of winning some significant battles. You can expect to succeed and have your desires gratified. Gifts may be received, awards and recognition won.

Reversed

The hopes and wishes you have for your success are being delayed, often by factors over which you have no control. You feel frustrated and angry, ready to do battle to get things set right. You're being challenged by circumstances to take a stance about who you are and what you intend to accomplish. You may have experienced some kind of betrayal that has caused you to re-evaluate your self-image.

Seven of Wands

The Seven of Wands is about courage and determination. It indicates you are willing to fight for what you believe in and will stand your ground. Previously, you might have fallen into complacency but now you are ready to face challenges.



Upright

Profit and gain come only after you have firmly held off your competition or enemies. You may be outnumbered, but your determination will win the day. You are discovering inner resources you hardly suspected you had and using them to overcome obstacles. Thus, you have the advantage and will eventually achieve success by sheer force of will and personality.

Reversed

This position signifies a time of confusion. You don't know whether to hold on or back off, but now is the time for firmness and decision. Even if you're not sure which way to go, it's one of those situations where any decision is better than none at all.

Eight of Wands

This is a card of movement, action, and excitement. Things happen rapidly, and success is assured. Follow through on what you've already put in motion and start planning new goals.



Upright

You have shot your arrows into the air, and they are speeding toward the target. Now is a time for action, for initiating the next phase of your enterprise. This may involve air travel or other movement. It's an exciting and hopeful period when you are likely to be extremely busy. Positive things are rapidly unfolding. Establish the roles you want to play and let go of those that no longer suit you.

Reversed

Movement may be unwanted, stressful, or unpleasant, such as being transferred across the country when you'd rather stay put. Go with the flow, wherever it leads. Allow yourself to be open to new experiences, but be prepared—be aware of what you're getting into. Relationships—marriage, business partnerships, family—may suffer. You might be required to reprioritize your schedule to accommodate other people's needs.

Nine of Wands

The Nine of Wands represents defending your legitimate territory. Through effort and determination, you have protected what's yours, shown courage under fire, and stood your ground. This is a card of recovery. Now you are in a strong position, and success is at hand.



Upright

Nines represent completion, and the Nine of Wands in a reading indicates that the job is done. You have had the discipline and the ability to plan well and wisely. Your relationships are developing positively, and you are moving forward with a sense of purpose and direction. If there is still opposition, your skills, strength, and courage will prevail over all opponents.

Reversed

You may be fighting a losing battle. If so, it's time to cut your losses and get out. Whatever it is, it is over, and if it hasn't worked out for you then go on to something else. Learn the lessons of failure—failure is but success's opposite and the wheel always turns. Get on with your life.

Ten of Wands

The Ten of Wands shows you taking up new responsibilities appropriate to the new cycle that's beginning now. These may seem burdensome, but you have the strength and character to shoulder them. You feel you can do anything at this time, even an extremely difficult task.



Upright

Your labor may have gone for naught, or you may be carrying burdens that really don't belong to you. You feel weary, as if the whole world is on your shoulders. It's up to you to decide whether to continue carrying the heavy responsibilities you have undertaken or if other people are shirking their part and should help out. Sometimes, one member of a family or organization gets all the dirty work for the simple reason that they are willing to do it. Make sure others are doing their fair share. Ask for help if you need it; don't let pride stand in your way.

Reversed

The burden is lifted—sometimes unexpectedly—and there is a feeling of freedom from undue responsibilities. Either you have taken the appropriate action or are about to do so. In any case, your load has been shifted, reportioned, or removed entirely. You are learning to delegate and take on less. Pressure and stress are reduced, and you are able to enjoy life more. Sometimes, however, depending on negative influences in the spread, you may be suffering the consequences of overload—either with ill health or burnout. You may need a recovery period.

What the Suit of Pentacles Means

Pentacles are often depicted as discs of gold, sometimes with a star (pentagram) or a five-sided design (pentagon) in the center. Interestingly, the pentacle is a powerful symbol in magick, used for protection against

harmful influences, so there is also a suggestion that money and material resources can provide protection.

The suit of Pentacles (or Coins) has come to represent people who deal in the economy: captains of industry, professionals, accountants, entrepreneurs, or shopkeepers. It includes bankers, lawyers, businessmen and women, stock traders—in other words, most of today's middle- and upper-middle classes. Pentacles can also symbolize those who desire to upgrade themselves financially, who understand money and how it works, and who respect the power it confers. In a reading, Pentacles usually point to an increase in the finances of the querent, and can show success in business, a raise, or relief from financial difficulties.

Therefore, in general the appearance of Pentacles is a positive note on a temporal basis. As Pentacles represent the element earth, they also indicated groundedness in the material and physical world. They can suggest concern about financial security, career, or whatever work you do as your livelihood. In some instances, Pentacles describe other types of material resources, physical capabilities, or health conditions.

King of Pentacles

The King of Pentacles is usually shown as a royal figure regally dressed and seated on a throne. He may or may not be crowned, but he appears comfortable with the power money confers. Generally the King holds a single coin upright in one hand and a scepter in the other, and he is sometimes depicted as a prosperous merchant.



Upright

This King represents a mature man who is not only wealthy but also courageous. A solid citizen, he is reputable, dependable, and kind to others. He symbolizes worldly power in a positive sense and is experienced in handling money matters. He can provide reliable counsel on matters of money, property, and security. He may also be a man who is cultured and refined, perhaps someone who serves as a patron.

If the King represents an actual person, he is likely to be well-disposed toward the querent—possibly he is a corporate head where the person works, or a banker from whom the querent is soliciting a loan. If the King is not an actual person, then his appearance indicates that the querent is engaged in some worldly enterprise that will meet with success.

Reversed

Some people consider this King reversed to be an extremely negative symbol, representing danger or an unwise business move. Others view the card as a warning to be aware of the small print in any contracts being negotiated. The King can also indicate unfair competition, shady business practices, or an untrustworthy man.

Queen of Pentacles

The Queen of Pentacles is a benevolent figure with a regal and kindly bearing, sometimes shown holding the Pentacle or coin in her lap and gazing fondly down at it. She may also be pictured standing, leaning against an ornate throne or chair. She is someone who understands and respects money as a tool but does not worship it.



Upright

This Queen represents a generous woman who is also an excellent manager in practical and financial areas. She may be a sensual woman who is at home in her body and enjoys her creature comforts. As an adviser, she favors the querent or will at least be fair. She is pragmatic and realistic and wants to see that the money she distributes produces tangible results. If the card doesn't represent a person, it shows a harvest after much labor, security, and prudent use of resources.

Reversed

In the reversed position, this Queen may represent someone who will try to block your efforts. She could be merely indifferent, or actively hostile. If she is a relative or an older friend, mentor, or boss, she might be a superficial person who only pretends to want to help you. Or the price of her help might be too high; she wants to control everything. She may lack confidence and try to compensate for her own shortcomings by a display of her wealth, or she may be hiding a lack of money. If this card does not represent a person, it describes a situation where caution is due and advises you to be careful whom you trust.



Knight of Pentacles

This Knight brings news concerning money, usually good news. He is typically depicted on horseback, facing sideways, wearing armor, and holding the Pentacle before him as if offering it to someone. Unlike the Knight of Wands who is on a charging horse, this Knight's horse is at

parade rest, calm and stable. He is poised on the edge of adventure or travel.

Upright

If this Knight represents a person, he's someone with the spirit of adventure, but who is practical and materially minded. He is good at performing any task set for him, but not likely to be a self-starter. If the card does not signify a person, it suggests a situation involving arrivals and/or departures. You may quit a job for a more lucrative one elsewhere, move to another locale for financial or work-related reasons, or experience other changes in your life relative to money, possessions, or security.

Reversed

The Knight reversed brings an unwelcome message about money, often a loss of some kind, a disappointment, or frustration due to an unforeseen delay. Existing plans may have to be aborted; delays could cause failure. If the card represents a person, he may be a young man who is unemployed or uninterested in employment. If it's not a person, this Knight shows a situation where waste, inertia, and problems with money exist.



Page of Pentacles

The Page of Pentacles is often shown as a youth standing in a countryside. He holds the Pentacle before him, as if admiring it. His attitude suggests that he desires money or wants to achieve the means to gain it, perhaps through education. Sometimes called the card of the student or scholar, the Page of Pentacles shows one who is so intent on his lessons that

he misses everything else going on around him. In some contemporary decks, the Page is pictured as a girl or androgynous figure.

Upright

The Page of Pentacles indicates good news regarding the acquisition of money or material goods. His appearance suggests someone who is intelligent, refined, sensitive to the arts, and appreciative of the good life. Ambitious and determined, he is goal-oriented. If he does not represent a person, this card indicates your own worldly ambitions and/or a message concerning them.

Reversed

This Page in the reversed position reflects someone who is lazy, unmotivated, or uninterested in furthering himself through education or work. If the card does not represent a person, it may indicate bad news concerning money matters. It can also refer to some sort of disappointment such as failing an exam, not getting into the college of your choice, or not being hired for a job. More effort and focus are needed.

Ace of Pentacles

The Ace of Pentacles often depicts a large Pentacle as the central image on the card. In the Waite deck, a hand juts from a cloud, holding the Pentacle in its palm. Other decks illustrate the coin in a decorative manner, sometimes as a shield. The Ace of Pentacles is the card of new success, new money, new enterprise, resources, ambition, opportunity, and material attainment. In some cases, it can also represent physical or health-related benefits.



Upright

This Ace is extremely positive, predicting success for some new enterprise you are starting. You are planting the seeds for a new venture involving the acquisition of money or financial security. The Ace is a strong indication of prosperity coming to you. Be open to receive the benefits it promises.

Reversed

This Ace in the reversed position indicates that your new venture is still in the idea stage. You are laying the groundwork to achieve a greater level of security and prosperity. Your material gain will come, but it is being delayed, and you must be patient and persistent. Don't get discouraged.

Two of Pentacles

The Two of Pentacles suggests either money coming from two sources or having to juggle finances to make ends meet. In some cases, it shows a financial or business partnership. It is a positive card indicating good fortune and enjoyment. You may be experiencing financial difficulty, but it won't last. Better times lie ahead.



Upright

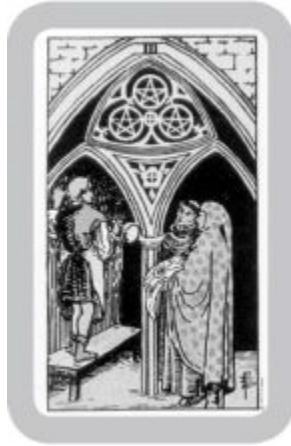
A message about money could be on its way to you, probably in written form. You are still in the stage of deciding which of two different options to choose. Perhaps you are concerned about financial issues and may be holding down more than one job, or moonlighting to make extra money. It's time to make a choice and stick with it even if you aren't sure of the outcome.

Reversed

You may be experiencing financial difficulties while pretending that all is well. You are juggling not only sources of income but options for change. This isn't the right time to make a change. Hang in there until the right moment presents itself. You need to overcome doubt and have faith in yourself.

Three of Pentacles

The Three of Pentacles is the card of the craftsman, someone who has already developed skill in a profession or trade. It's time to turn these skills to profit, and success is assured. The Three of Pentacles usually shows you are planning and conferring about a future action, such as cooperating in a business venture.



Upright

You are acquiring marketable skills, preparing yourself for action in the world. Perhaps you're a recent graduate or have gone back to school to upgrade your skills or change your career. You are enterprising and may be interested in commerce, or a specific trade or business. You can anticipate a rise in prestige and earnings. This card can also indicate a payback period when you demonstrate your abilities and begin to reap the rewards of your efforts. Or you could receive money that's owed to you.

Reversed

You aren't making the effort to acquire the new skills you need in today's changing marketplace. You may be stuck in a job you really don't like but lack the confidence or ambition to strike out and change things for the better. Get going—thought without action is useless.

Four of Pentacles

The Four of Pentacles indicates a security-conscious person who is holding tight to money and material possessions. You may fear that loss is in the offing and are trying to prepare yourself by closely guarding what you have. Or you may simply be overly cautious and conservative in financial areas.



Upright You are hanging on to something— either your possessions or a situation—in a stubborn and inflexible manner. Fear of change may be involved, or you may merely be comfortable where you are. Your fixed attitude, however, may be limiting you and blocking new opportunities for success and happiness.

Reversed

You may be trying to make something happen prematurely, or you are holding on too tightly to your current circumstances. Perhaps you are quarreling with someone over money, such as in a divorce proceeding. You need to loosen up and have more trust in the universe to provide solutions.

Five of Pentacles

Of all the Pentacles, this is the only one with a basic negative connotation. It suggests financial losses, business problems, or material lack. It can also indicate that spiritual bankruptcy is at the root of this unfavorable condition. In some instances, this card can show that your priorities are spiritual, not financial or worldly.

Upright

This Five is a warning that money may soon be very tight, that losses may ensue from ill-advised investments, or that support you had counted on won't be forthcoming, such as a grant, legacy, or job. In some cases, it advises you to ask for help—from other people or the universe.



Reversed

You are being advised to get your house in order financially. Cut your losses any way you can to avoid further deterioration of your finances; if you are in debt, which you probably are, focus on getting it cleared out. Be extremely careful of any future investments. Don't take risks at this time.



Six of Pentacles

This Six shows that past financial problems have been resolved. Your income is steady and your security is stable. You are in a balanced position concerning income and outflow. You are using your prosperity to help others. Because Sixes represent give and take, this card can also indicate a business partnership or shared financial responsibility.

Upright

Good things are coming to you and going out from you, in material terms. You are experiencing abundance, prosperity, and personal gratification. You may be in a position to support a good cause, perhaps by contributing financially to people who are struggling upward. This card can also represent philanthropic projects or providing work for other people.

Reversed

You need to recoup after a period of loss and confusion. You want to help others, but you don't have the means, and that makes you unhappy. You may be required to find a pattern that will create a sense of security for you so that you can find peace of mind.

Seven of Pentacles

The Seven of Pentacles indicates receiving the benefits that are due to you, that you have earned by your own hard work. Like a farmer harvesting crops that he has nurtured through bad weather, you are reaping what you've sown. The harvest may still be a ways off, however, so keep tending your fields.



Upright

You've put in the time and effort and paid your dues. Now you will gain in your business or other enterprise. Not only that, but you feel great satisfaction from a job well done. Growth and good fortune are yours, well earned.

Reversed

You are experiencing disappointment or failure in some enterprise. Financial difficulties, usually the result of an unwise investment or a loan unpaid, may be causing you concern. It's a time to adjust your attitudes about how you use money and how you yourself are responsible.

Eight of Pentacles

The Eight is a card of craftsmanship and conscientious work. It suggests developing and applying your skills in a productive manner. You know what you want and how to go about achieving it. Be sincere and persevere, and your efforts will succeed. A business or project will prosper as a result of refining your craft or improving your processes. A new venture augurs success because you are training yourself intensively with a clear goal in mind.



Upright

You are integrating old skills into a new form, or you are adding new skills. You've tried various means of making your living, and you are now finalizing how you want to use your personal resources to fulfill your needs and expand. Your sureness of purpose guarantees success. Your craftsmanship will be rewarded by increased income, opportunity, and respect.

Reversed

When this card is reversed, there is an indication that you have not mastered the necessary skills to achieve your goals. You may desire to

begin some new enterprise, but a lack of ambition, ability, or clarity prevents your success. More effort or education may be necessary.

Nine of Pentacles

The Nine of Pentacles suggests independence from financial concerns and worries. You receive abundance from proper management in business or financial affairs. This card says you've arrived, accomplished your goals, and now feel secure.



Upright

You have integrated the factors of your life into a secure base. Now you are enjoying money, resources, and physical energy as a smooth combined flow. There is plenty all around you— material well-being, order, safety, and success.

Reversed

Your security is shaky, and you may be dependent on someone else— perhaps a spouse or relative—for your financial well-being. Circumstances may have caused you to lose your independence. Figure out how to regain what you've lost.

Ten of Pentacles

The Ten of Pentacles is a happy card, indicating a solid and secure life, both in business and with your family. Your work and planning have paid off, and you are enjoying the fruits of your labor.



Upright

You are emphasizing home and family at this point, now that you have a secure income to support them. You may be planning to build a new home, or buy a second vacation home. Family matters are at the forefront, and you have the leisure to concentrate on personal affairs. In some cases, this card can represent marrying into money or receiving an inheritance.

Reversed

You may be so established at this point that you are stagnating. Maybe you have retired comfortably and are just sitting around watching TV. You need to activate some growth in your life to avoid boredom. Take up a hobby, start a new business, do charity work, or teach others your skills.

What the Suit of Swords Means

The Swords symbolize events, conditions, situations, or attitudes that may be difficult or challenging. However, as a result, they also represent the growth and development of the conscious mind. When Swords appear in a reading, you may be experiencing stress or problems, but these are making you think.

The suffering associated with the Swords can also be the result of overanalyzing situations. In our modern society, where left-brain logic is favored over right-brain intuition and feeling, Swords can represent the alienation that comes from cutting yourself off from your inner self.

The Swords are often depicted as unsheathed double-bladed sabers, sometimes as daggers or the magician's tool known as an athame. Although

usually shown as battle swords, they suggest power and authority wielded for some purpose other than physical fighting. Some writers interpret the Swords as totally negative, others see a spiritual side to the Swords as well as the obstacles, pain, and difficulties sometimes associated with them. This is because we often come to a spiritual path through intense suffering of some kind, be it physical, mental, psychological, or emotional.

TAROT TALK

An old Chinese proverb says, "Life is pain. Pain makes you think. Thinking makes you wise. And wisdom makes life endurable." It is this point of view that the Swords represent.

King of Swords

The King of Swords is a somewhat stern figure who is in absolute command, but who can be trusted to be fair in his judgment and decisions. He is usually pictured enthroned, armored, helmeted, and crowned, a combination of symbols that suggests not only power and authority, but a willingness to use it forcefully if necessary. Sometimes he holds a set of balanced scales suggesting both justice and the sign of Libra. The suit of Swords corresponds to the element of Air; therefore, his appearance often has to do with your mental processes.



Upright

This King represents a man of great strength and authority. If he stands for a person, he is involved with mental work, such as a researcher, a lawyer, teacher, someone in the communications field, or a military officer.

As such, he is a good counselor with acute mental dexterity. He has a gift for thinking clearly and rapidly, and he is able to express his thoughts with considerable eloquence. If this King is not a person, he represents a situation in which mental and communication skills are called for. When he appears, you may be on the verge of a spiritual breakthrough and are ready to communicate it.

Reversed

When reversed, this King indicates fickleness, using words as rapiers to wound, gossiping, superficiality, playing one person against the other, or rigidity of opinions. If he does not signify a person, he can represent a situation in which the people around you are antagonistic to your ideas or your spiritual quest. You may have to keep these matters to yourself.

Queen of Swords

The Queen of Swords is the female counterpart of the King, except that she represents the intuitive and creative side of the mental processes. A mature woman who sits on an ornate throne and wears beautiful robes, she holds her sword in one hand and reaches out with the other in a gesture suggesting permission to rise and come forward. She is a formidable figure with power and authority, either in the mental world or in the spiritual realm.



Upright

When the Queen of Swords appears in a reading, she may represent a single or independent woman with authority and power. Often she is

someone with keen intellectual or communicative abilities—a writer, professor, lawyer, minister, businesswoman, or scholar. In some instances, this card may indicate someone who has endured emotional loss and separation, perhaps as a result of a divorce or death. If she describes a person, she is strong-willed and has the ability to cope with her loss and go on with her life. If she does not represent a person, this Queen can indicate that the querent is going through a difficult experience, which will open new vistas for positive growth. This is especially true if an Ace appears in the reading, too.

Reversed

When this Queen is reversed, the person she represents is not dealing well with a loss. There may be sadness, withdrawal, or mourning beyond reasonable limits. If the card does not stand for a person, it can represent a situation in which the querent is bogged down emotionally, wallowing in pain, letting her heart rule her head.

Knight of Swords

The Knight of Swords is often shown leaning forward on a fully charging horse, his sword held as if he is ready to encounter the enemy. He is definitely on the attack and by his expression he expects to win the battle. He can represent a person who is overly aggressive or argumentative, who lives in attack mode. Or he can mean that you are aggressively pursuing a lifestyle that will allow you to live out your own philosophical ideals.



Upright

As a messenger, the Knight of Swords may bring bad news that relates to you personally or to someone close to you. Some kind of conflict is at hand, usually of a mental nature. There could be violent differences of opinion around you, with angry messages being sent and received. If this Knight is not a person, you may be so focused on your intellectual pursuits that you are neglecting other facets of your life. You may be expressing your ideas too forcefully and antagonizing the opposition. Diplomacy may be called for.

Reversed

When reversed, this Knight loses his aggressiveness and becomes passive about a situation that requires action. He suggests you are delaying doing what is necessary, perhaps neglecting paperwork or communication. There could be serious repercussions from withholding information. If this card is not a person, it can indicate that you are mentally closed off from a situation that desperately needs attention, thereby creating bad feeling and opposition.

Page of Swords

The Page of Swords indicates risk on a mental or spiritual level. It might mean you are taking up some new line of thought or study. Many decks depict a youth who seems a bit unsure of his ability to wield his weapon, although he tries to appear as if he can easily defeat any enemy. He usually wears a short garment, leather or padded cloth, instead of armor. Some contemporary decks show the Page as a girl or androgynous figure.

Upright

As a messenger, this Page brings news of problems and difficulties, perhaps relating to a younger person you know. An offspring may have failed college exams or be in trouble with the law. An element of experimentation is indicated here—either you or someone else is taking a risk or behaving in a risky manner that might cause problems. The Page is motivated by unconventional activity, which can cause strife. Overconfidence or the ignorance of youth might also get this person into trouble.



Reversed

The reversed Page is having trouble getting it together. Although this young person is attractive and charming—eager, confident, clever, active—he isn't strictly on the up and up. This Page could represent someone who is sponging off others, maybe parents or friends. Or it could indicate someone who is bad tempered or capable of spiteful action. Insecurity lies at the root of this person's actions.

Ace of Swords

Like all of the Aces, the Ace of Swords indicates a new beginning. Most decks depict an upright sword, sometimes crowned at the tip. In the Waite deck, a disembodied hand coming out of clouds holds the Sword. The Sword and crown are decorated with living vegetation—vines, flowers, leaves, fruit. This Ace indicates a triumph over difficulties through the use of mental means or spiritual growth. It is emblematic of a major breakthrough.



Upright

A brand new lifestyle is beginning. You have achieved this opportunity through willpower and using your mental faculties. Prosperity, recognition, new development—especially spiritual growth—are sure to follow in the wake of your new direction in life. This Ace signals a birth, usually of an idea or enterprise. You now are in a position to manifest your philosophy in a new way.

Reversed

As this is an extremely positive card, the reversed position only indicates delays or glitches. What you planned for on the mental plane may not come into manifestation on the physical plane as quickly as you had hoped, and this may be causing frustration and tension.

Two of Swords

The Waite deck shows a blindfolded woman holding two swords crossed over her breasts with a crescent moon above and the ocean behind her. The card represents a situation in which it appears impossible to move forward. Because you can't figure out with logic or intellect how to proceed, you must rely on blind faith that the universe will handle things.



Upright

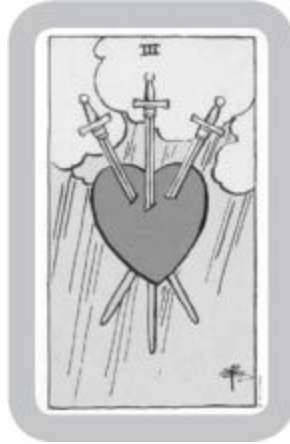
This card indicates stasis. You may be maintaining the situation by putting up a façade and ignoring the underlying tension that exists. This is an uncomfortable position to be in, but you aren't ready to do anything about it yet. You need to speak up and communicate clearly. Eventually, however, change must take place. You have choices. Remove the blindfold and look honestly at the situation.

Reversed

When the Two of Swords appears reversed, it exacerbates the above situation. You feel helpless to make the necessary changes. One party may be unwilling to admit to the truth of the situation, making discourse impossible. This may result in deceit, disloyalty, or duplicity.

Three of Swords

The Three of Swords is a card of severance, signifying separation and sorrow, perhaps the end of a love relationship. However, there is the sense that the separation or breakup was needed. An alliance had outworn its usefulness, and, although there is sorrow or regret, the end result is positive. This card can also mean you feel isolated and cut off from something you love—a way of life, your home and family, a philosophy, pursuit, or job.



Upright

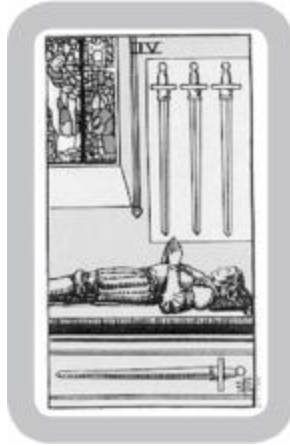
You are feeling the pain of separation, possibly in the area of love. Sometimes this card can signify a love triangle. A third party has entered into the formerly stable situation and caused the breakup, but it was ready to happen anyway. It's time to let go. Whatever has died must be allowed to disintegrate within your psychic structure. Don't try to hold on to the past.

Reversed

You are taking this separation too hard and not accepting the truth of the situation. You may be blaming someone else instead of acknowledging that you were a party to the breakup. You may be suffering depression, unable or unwilling to pull yourself together and get on with your life. Don't get bogged down with what might have been.

Four of Swords

The Four of Swords is a card of respite after the sorrow or misfortune of the Three. It represents rest and recuperation, of working on your problems quietly and with faith. You feel the need for introspection and solitude, to contemplate and understand what happened and why.



Upright

After a painful time you are in the first stage of recovery, whether from emotional upheaval or physical illness. You are resting and taking time to think things through and plan your next moves wisely. You may want to retreat from other people and the world while you get your inner house in order.

Reversed

You are not allowing yourself the rest and respite you need, and if you continue this way you could make yourself ill. You need a period of calm and quiet in the wake of a major disruption. Refusing to make time to recuperate, both mentally and emotionally, will only worsen the situation.

Five of Swords

The Five of Swords suggests the double-edged nature of the sword. One edge signifies defeat, misfortune, betrayal, and loss; the other suggests learning to accept the boundaries we all must face and live with. Fives are about adjustment, and this Five indicates you are adjusting to some kind of change brought on by distress or loss. It's an uncomfortable process but a necessary one.



Upright

Change is part of life, and the more you resist it, the more difficult you make things for yourself. Whatever needs to be changed—your lifestyle, your philosophy, your inner beliefs about yourself—now is the time to get to work.

Reversed

Your losses have hit you hard, and you are in a state of great unhappiness. You feel hurt and betrayed, angry and discouraged, but only you can pull yourself out of your misery. You may feel confused about why the crisis occurred, but deep down you know the reasons. You just don't want to face them.

Six of Swords

The Six of Swords indicates that you are moving away from past troubles, putting them behind you. It marks the beginning of a new phase after a time of upheaval. You have stabilized yourself and are enjoying a new peace of mind. This is the calm after the storm—a period of smooth sailing with relatively few problems ahead.



Upright

This is a time of integration—or reintegration. Harmony and ease prevail. New people you can trust come into your life. After some intense suffering, you now feel optimistic and balanced. This card can also indicate a move or a journey over water. The destination may be unknown, or the effects of the move may be uncertain, but luck is on your side, and any change you make will go smoothly.

Reversed

As this is a positive card, the reversed position simply means delays, or that the harmony you are experiencing is internal rather than being expressed externally. You may have come to a new way of thinking about your life, or you may be affirming your old beliefs and attitudes, finding a path that's comfortable for you.



Seven of Swords

When the Seven of Swords shows up, it urges caution in all dealings. Surreptitious action or indirect communications may be occurring. Nothing is quite what it seems to be, and you have to use your wit to achieve your aims. Be wary of overconfidence. You may appear to be on top now, but imprudence could do you in.

Upright

You have got the upper hand over a tricky situation, but you still need to exercise caution. Discretion and discrimination are required, as are diplomacy and evasive tactics. You may not enjoy this oblique approach, but you'll be more likely to achieve success this way.

Reversed

When the Seven of Swords appears reversed, it emphasizes all of the above but includes the possibility of deception. Maintain caution and vigilance in all things during this period. Stay open-minded and flexible so that you can respond to changes speedily. You may be experimenting with different plans of action, getting various points of view.

Eight of Swords

The tension of the Eight of Swords is related to that of the Two, except that the Two indicates denial while the Eight suggests you are conscious of the choices available. Despite this, you feel trapped—either unable or unwilling to choose and therefore stuck in a painful state. You are your own worst enemy.



Upright

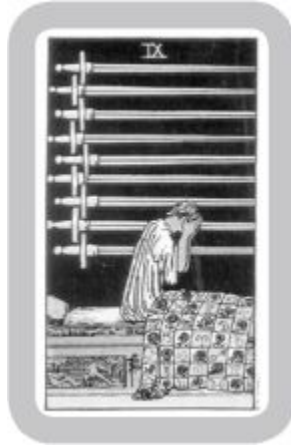
Most writers view this as an extremely negative card. In the Waite deck, a bound and blindfolded woman is surrounded by eight swords stuck into the sand around her, like a barrier. The card describes a situation that causes great unhappiness, but you can change matters. The bad situation is temporary and, if the card falls in the “future” position, the problem can even be avoided.

Reversed

This card reversed warns that what is already wrong can get worse, or that a difficult situation is approaching. Make sure all your affairs are in the best possible order. If you’ve been putting off paying your taxes, getting insurance, or settling some legal matter, take care of it promptly. Your well-being depends on using your head and preparing for emergencies and unexpected calamities.

Nine of Swords

The Nine of Swords shows extreme anxiety, nightmares, tension, unhappiness, and regrets over past mistakes or misfortunes. When it appears, the querent is in an unhappy and tense state of mind, whether or not the facts bear out the fear. Thus the suffering associated with this card may be mostly in your mind.



Upright

The Nine of Swords indicates that you are troubled by bad dreams or horrible fantasies. Deep-rooted or repressed issues are trying to surface so you can resolve them. Mental torture may result as circumstances force you to change your attitudes and beliefs. This is not all bad, however, no matter how painful it seems. Nine is the number of completion; thus, this card indicates that the changes you are being required to make forecast a better future.

Reversed

The Nine of Swords reversed shows intense mental anguish. It's time to examine belief systems that no longer apply to your life and are standing in the way of your progress. You are suffering because you refuse to face the cause of your problems. Honesty is called for if you are to resolve the situation.

Ten of Swords

Although the Ten of Swords is another difficult card, its appearance marks the beginning of the end of a period of trials and tribulations. It also signifies the start of a new cycle. But first, you have to clear away the debris of the old cycle and often this process is painful. Stress and exhaustion may accompany the appearance of this card. Stop worrying.



Upright

When the Ten of Swords appears upright, it suggests that you need to make a clean break from the past and its attendant pain and suffering. Whether this means a divorce, quitting a job, moving across the country, or changing a belief system, make the break cleanly, leaving no loose ends. Do away with previous illusions that have clouded your vision.

Reversed

When the Ten of Swords appears reversed, it indicates that you are holding back, reluctant to take the necessary steps to move into a new cycle. You are delaying actions or deceiving yourself about a situation. You may be making excuses for yourself or someone else to maintain the status quo, but you are only prolonging your agony. Make a choice, even if it's the wrong one.

What the Suit of Cups Means

The Cups describe emotions, love, romance, social relationships, congenial situations, culture, comfort, intuition, and the unconscious. The love shown by these cards is not just romantic love, but friendship and love of one's fellow humans as well. Kindness, compassion, and geniality are depicted in the imagery of this suit. Thus, the Cups are almost always considered positive. If there are negative factors in the reading, a Cup card will mitigate the bad omen, help to make a situation better, or point the way to a solution.

In most decks the Cups are pictured as large, beautiful, often ornate vessels or chalices. Sometimes they appear double-ended as if they could be filled from either side.

King of Cups

The King of Cups has a loving demeanor. He is a mature man, usually pictured seated on a throne, often with water in the background. In the Waite deck, his crown is more like an elaborate hat than a regal headpiece, suggesting that he stands with rather than above his subjects. Rarely is he shown wearing armor—usually plain robes—so there is nothing of the militant about him. This King's expression is benign, his attitude relaxed and non-threatening.



Upright

This King indicates a man who is kindly disposed—a benevolent father figure, who may represent your own father or someone who fills that role for you. He can also signify an older man with whom you either have or want a love relationship. Whether as a friend, advisor, or lover, he is utterly trustworthy and dependent, and he can be relied upon to come through for you when you need him. Most interpretations consider this King to be a man of culture, interested in the arts, possibly himself a creative type. If the King does not represent an actual person, he indicates a situation that is favorable, especially if it is an artistic pursuit.

Reversed

Your involvement with some kind of love situation is ending, but the process should not cause much pain. It's time to move away from dependency on an older person—perhaps your father or a mentor or teacher—and strike out on your own. Whether the circumstances are related to a person or to your own inner psychic process, the result is the same. It is also possible that this King reversed represents someone who is trying to get rid of you for some reason, romantic or otherwise. You need to let go and, if necessary, mourn the passing of something that was good once but is now over.

Queen of Cups

The Queen of Cups is a beautiful and benevolent figure. She holds an ornate chalice and gazes at it as if she could see visions of the future inside. She wears robes that appear to be filmy and flowing, and her crown is elaborate but graceful. Usually she is pictured with water flowing at her feet, for this suit corresponds to the Water element. An affectionate and loving woman, whether wife, mother, friend, or lover, she is wise in the ways of the human heart. Her attitude is one of receptivity and approachability.



Upright

The Queen of Cups can represent any kindly woman in your life. If the querent is a man, she may signify his wife or the woman he loves. She is creative, perhaps an artist, with visionary tendencies. Her psychic ability is highly developed and tends to be accurate. However, she tempers her intuitive nature with mature judgment. If she represents the querent herself,

the above qualities apply although they may still be undeveloped. If this Queen does not represent a person, the situation she describes may concern a creative endeavor, relationship, or circumstances with a positive emotional tone.

Reversed

This Queen reversed can indicate a love relationship gone sour, or someone who is having trouble expressing emotion. If the card represents a person, it can be a dishonest advisor. Be careful whom you trust with your secrets and your emotional life. If the card represents the querent, it can mean that you are playing with possible dangerous psychic or emotional matters you don't understand.

Knight of Cups

Portrayed as a handsome young man, usually sitting upright on a white horse in parade or dressage position, he holds the Cup out in front of him. His helmet may be winged, a symbol of the messenger. In this case, the message he brings is of love or good tidings. Usually depicted in an outdoor setting, sometimes with water under the horse's hooves, this Knight is armored only lightly. He's a lover, not a fighter.



Upright

The Knight of Cups is bringing you a message about love, or he may represent your true love—the knight on the white horse! His appearance indicates you are deeply involved in an emotional situation, to the point where little else matters. You may be awaiting this message—such as a

declaration of love or a proposal of marriage—with such anticipation that everything else seems insignificant. If the Knight does not represent a lover, he is certainly a friend, honest, intelligent, and willing to aid you.

Reversed

The message you hope for has been delayed or may never arrive. The relationship you yearn for may be based on deceit or superficiality on the other person's side. You may be obsessing about someone who really doesn't care that much about you and who will never make a commitment, even if he has led you to believe he is sincere. This person is fickle, likes to flirt, but belongs to the “love 'em and leave 'em” school of romance.

Page of Cups

The Page of Cups usually shows a young man in decorative short garb wearing an elaborate hat. His attitude is relaxed and open, and he seems well pleased with himself. In the Waite deck, he holds the Cup in one hand — a fish, symbol of the Water element, peeks out of it. It's as though he magically produced the fish like a rabbit out of a hat, and he seems to expect approval. Some decks depict the Page as a girl or androgynous figure.



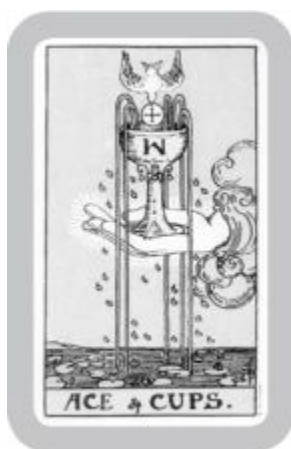
Upright

This Page signifies a young person, male or female—possibly a son, daughter, or a younger sibling—who is bringing you a message about love. It might mean an engagement or a wedding—some situation that holds an inherent emotional risk. The circumstances may be exciting yet scary at the

same time, as with a sudden elopement. Often the Page suggests naiveté or vulnerability, especially in matters of the heart. If the card represents the querent, it says you have already decided to take an emotional risk. You are willing to give it your all and feel things will work out.

Reversed

The Page reversed shows a fishy situation, something you should look at carefully. If the card represents a person, there may be deceit involved—flattery for gain, an unwanted pregnancy, or secrecy in matters of the heart. Someone may be trying to seduce you, and you are blinded to the falseness of his or her intentions. Or you may be playing the role of the seducer, toying with someone's emotions. If so, take care. You might get hurt yourself.



Ace of Cups

The Ace of Cups shows a single large chalice, usually with water flowing fountain-like out of it. In the Waite deck, a hand emerging from a cloud grasps the Cup as if offering it to the querent. This Ace suggests a fountain of love or the Holy Grail. The Ace represents a gift, in this case a gift of love, either personal or divine.

Upright

The Ace of Cups indicates a new beginning—a new love or a one-on-one relationship of any kind. Previously unfelt emotions come into play now, perhaps as a result of seeing a relationship in a new way. This Ace can also

herald a birth— of a child or an idea. This is a fertile time for emotional or creative growth, as this Ace symbolizes the consummation of something hoped for.

Reversed

When reversed, this Ace indicates delays or disappointments in love. Sometimes a new beginning doesn't develop as hoped. Difficulties in getting a new relationship or creative effort off the ground could be indicated, or something you are trying to set in motion meets unforeseen and frustrating obstacles. Perhaps this is not the right time to start something new.

Two of Cups

The Two of Cups describes a coupling of some sort—a marriage, a partnership, a union. Harmony is in the air. You may be in the honeymoon stage of a relationship or endeavor when all seems right. This card can also represent a new stage of happiness and harmony in an existing relationship.



Upright

You are moving in tandem with another person now, and all is going smoothly. Whether it is a romantic relationship or a friendship, you feel accord, mutual admiration, and good will toward each other. Ordinarily, this card refers to a love match between the sexes, but it can also indicate a partnership of another sort.

Reversed

This card has such a harmonious vibration that its reversed position isn't much different from the upright one. It can suggest delays or that the relationship may have to be kept a secret for some reason.

Three of Cups

The Three of Cups signifies that something has been brought to completion. There is victory and success. The act of falling in love signified by the Two of Cups may have resulted in a baby, or a creative venture has produced a salable product. It's time for a celebration!



Upright

You are experiencing success and plenty; a time of merriment and celebration is at hand. Your feelings are clear now, and you understand your emotional patterns in a positive, growth-producing way. You're on your way to great things.

Reversed

The Three of Cups reversed remains a positive influence, except that the gratification you are getting may be more sensual than deeply emotional. You will still enjoy success, but your achievements may be in small things.



Four of Cups

The Four of Cups represents a state of apathy and withdrawal. However, this may be a necessary rest after the hectic excitement represented by the Three. It's a time to get away by yourself and just drift and dream for a while before getting back into your daily grind.

Upright

You are withdrawing your emotions from a situation or a person. After intense emotional involvement, you may need some space for yourself. There's a feeling of letdown after a build-up, as in the postpartum blues or when you have to deal with all the nitty-gritties of making a marriage work.

Reversed

You may be experiencing displeasure, disappointment, or dissatisfaction with a relationship or the way a creative project is turning out. You want to withdraw to regain perspective and balance.

Five of Cups

The Five of Cups signifies that you are brooding over past wrongs, losses, disappointments, or hurts. You are dwelling on a painful past and refusing to look forward to a positive future.



Upright

Your unhappiness is a result of your attitude, which you can change. This is a card of choice. You can continue to brood over what went wrong, or you can contemplate how things can be better in the future. You don't have to be miserable.

Reversed

You are in a state of indecision. You are refusing to make up your mind about something or to face facts. Just because there have been past losses doesn't mean there can't be future gains. If you continue in this negative state of mind, you will only make things worse.



Six of Cups

The Six of Cups signifies nostalgia and happy memories. This card refers to a sentimental remembrance of things past. These pleasant and comforting memories can be used to better your future, to build on. Knowing that you have been happy in the past will enhance your ability to be happy in the future.

Upright

You are experiencing emotions connected to your past that will shed light on your future. You are feeling calm and collected about past events, putting them into perspective, and beginning to understand how they can bring a future renewal.

Reversed

The Six of Cups reversed suggests changes in the immediate environment that will make you feel more secure. These may involve meeting new friends or making new associations. You are developing new emotional tools that will aid you in the future. An important event is coming soon.

Seven of Cups

The Seven of Cups signifies a time of great creative potential, along with the energy to make use of it. Many options are available: the difficulty is in choosing the right one. This card represents fantasy and imagination.



Upright

You are looking at a number of possibilities now—too many to make an easy choice. With so many options, you are exploring different roles in your imagination but deciding which to manifest is a challenge.

Reversed

You are confused because too much is going on. You need peace and quiet to sort through the multiple choices confronting you. Let your feelings be your guide.

Eight of Cups

The only solution seems to be to turn your back on a situation and go in another direction. What's there isn't working as expected or isn't important anymore. You know what you want and won't settle for anything less.

Upright

You wish things were different, but they aren't so you have to let go. Cut your losses and get out of a situation or relationship that has failed despite your best efforts. Turn your sights and your energies toward something that is likely to be more fulfilling.



Reversed

You are running away without facing the problem you want to escape—taking the coward's way out. Things haven't worked out as you hoped, and you want to bolt without giving the situation a second chance. If you split now, you may regret it later.



Nine of Cups

This is the best pip card in the entire Tarot deck. Sometimes called the “wish card,” it indicates great joy and happiness, dreams coming true, and getting what you wish for. It’s like winning the lottery and meeting Mr. or Ms. Right on the same day.

Upright

This card means success, triumph, everything you want and hope for. When the Nine of Cups appears, make a wish. Ask yourself, “What do I really want?” The card responds: You will get it.

Reversed

It’s hard to say anything negative about this card, even in the reverse position. Relax, have faith in the universe, and don’t get in your own way by trying to control things.



Ten of Cups

The Ten of Cups represents contentment, real love, domestic bliss, and satisfaction in all your endeavors. It symbolizes people living harmoniously together, sharing their love and their lives unconditionally. This card is so favorable that it can offset any negative cards in a reading.

Upright

This card is an indication of everything that most people wish for love and harmony, a happy family life, true love and companionship. It signifies a time of completion, of reaping what you have sown. It symbolizes abundance in a larger sense.

Reversed

Delays and obstacles block the happiness you long for. Circumstances beyond your control may be the cause, and at the moment there's nothing you can do but keep a positive attitude. Hold tight and wait for things to change, which they will.

Looking Deeper: Seven Important Spreads

Introduction to Spreads

Spreads are configurations or arrangements of cards—usually three or more, and up to more than a dozen—designed to convey certain types of information. You could think of a spread as a puzzle that presents a picture when all the pieces are in place. This chapter contains different spreads, some simple, some complex. In a spread, each position within the overall pattern means something specific. The relationships between the cards become as important as the individual cards themselves.

You'll probably find that some spreads appeal to you more than others or are more useful for your purposes. None is better than another; the choice of which spread(s) to use is yours entirely. After you become experienced at working with the Tarot, you might decide to design your own spreads or adapt traditional spreads to suit yourself.

A Truth About Tarot

By combining the meanings of the cards with the meanings of the positions in a spread, the insights provided are increased multiplicatively.

The Significator

One of the first steps in laying out many spreads is to choose a Significator. A Significator is a card that symbolizes the person for whom the reading is being done. Usually this card is incorporated into the spread, although sometimes it is laid aside face up. In some cases, a Significator could represent a group or organization, a situation or event. Choose a card that best describes the person or matter about which you are inquiring.

Single Card Method, What Does It Mean?

This is the easiest and most basic of all spreads, and it can be used to answer all types of questions. Although you won't get as much information as you would from a longer, more complex spread, this method can be surprisingly helpful—especially in answering straightforward questions for which you need an immediate answer.

Shuffle and cut the cards while thinking about your question. Then draw a single card from the pack. You can either pick the top card from the deck or fan out all the cards face down and select one at random. The card's meaning will shed light on your question.

Two Cards: The Either/Or Method

Use this spread when you have two options and can't decide between them. After shuffling and cutting the deck, select two cards either from the top or at random from the pack. The first card represents one option, the second card signifies the other choice.



Three Cards, Representing the Past, Present, and Future

This three-card spread lets you see the past influences or conditions regarding a situation, the present state of the matter, and what's likely to occur in the future. After shuffling and cutting the deck, select three cards either from the top of the pack or at random. Lay them out side by side. The card on the left represents the past; the middle card shows the present; the card on the right indicates what's likely to occur in the future.



Overcome Obstacles: The Four-Card Spread

This spread offers advice for dealing with a specific concern. Its strength is its simple, direct approach to dealing with practical, everyday

problems. Shuffle and cut the cards, then lay four cards out side by side in a horizontal line, from left to right.

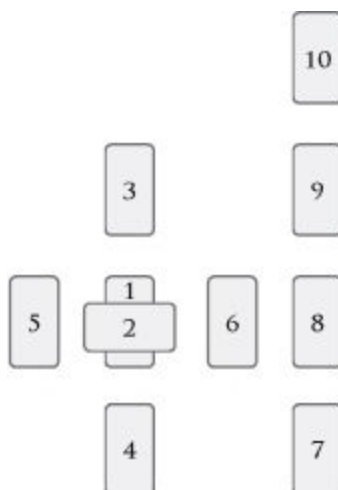
Lay out next to each other and take a look.

Card 1: Situation

Card 2: Obstacle

Card 3: Action recommended

Card 4: Outcome



The Traditional Celtic Cross Spread

This popular and versatile spread calls for a Significator. Place it on the table to bring you (or the person for whom the reading is being done) into the reading, then lay Card 1 on top of the Significator. Continue laying out the rest of the cards in the following pattern.

Card 1: This covers you and describes your immediate concerns.

Card 2: This crosses you and describes obstacles facing you.

Card 3: This crowns you and describes what is known to you objectively.

Card 4: This is beneath you and describes the foundation of the concern or past influences affecting the situation. It can also show what is unknown about the situation.

Card 5: This is behind you and describes past influences now fading away.

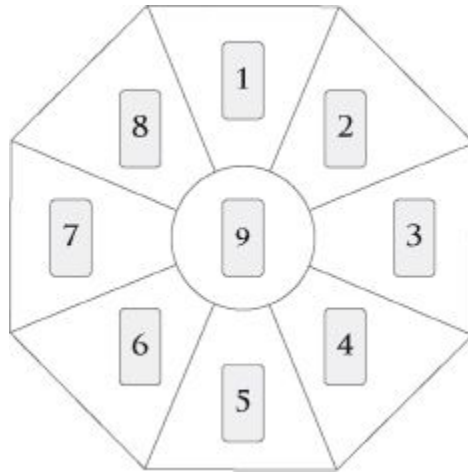
Card 6: This is before you and describes new circumstances coming into being—the near future.

Card 7: This is your self and describes your current state of mind.

Card 8: This is your house and describes the circumstances surrounding the situation.

Card 9: This is what you hope or fear, perhaps what you both want and fear.

Card 10: This is what will come and describes the likely future outcome.



Home Life and You: Feng Shui Spread

This pattern represents the eight-sided octagon called a bagua, used by feng shui practitioners to examine the connections between a person's home and his or her life. The cards show the energies and influences operating in each area of the querent's life.

Card 1: Fame, future, career

Card 2: Relationships, marriage, partnerships

Card 3: Creativity, children

Card 4: Helpful people, friends, agents/associates/colleagues, travel

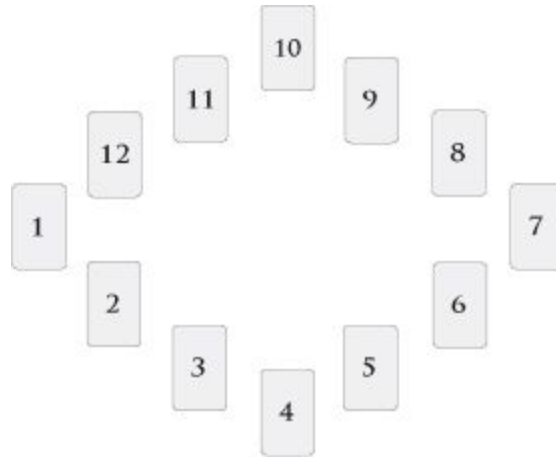
Card 5: Self, identity, image

Card 6: Wisdom, knowledge, spirituality

Card 7: Family, community, neighbors

Card 8: Wealth

Card 9: Health



Horoscope Spread: Astrology Lends a Hand

In this spread, twelve cards are laid out in a circle. Each card corresponds to one of the twelve houses of the astrological chart. A thirteenth card, a Significator, can be placed in the center if desired.

Each house refers to a specific area of life; thus, the cards are read in reference to the house in which they fall. For instance, an Ace in the second house indicates a new money-making opportunity or project; an Ace in the seventh describes the beginning of a relationship. This spread is not generally used to answer specific questions—it provides an overview of the person's life at the time of the reading. The querent's sun sign or birth chart are not factors in a reading that uses this spread.

The First House: The Self

House One begins at the nine o'clock position, and the cards are dealt counterclockwise. The first house refers to the physical body and appearance, as well as your vitality, identity, sense of self, and the immediate impression you make on others.

The Second House: Personal Resources

The second house shows what you consider valuable. This includes money, personal possessions, resources, earning ability, and your identification with what you own.

The Third House: The Near Environment

The third house covers three areas of life that at first may not seem related, but taken together represent normal daily life, what astrologers call the near environment—communications related to the routine of everyday life; involvement with friends, neighbors, siblings, and the community at large; and short-distance travel in your near environment.

The Fourth House: Roots

The fourth house represents the foundation of your life— home, family, parents (especially the mother), tradition, heritage, the past, your homeland—in short, your roots.

The Fifth House: Self-Expression

The fifth house shows your creative and self-expressive side, which may play out as artistic endeavors, romantic relationships, hobbies and amusements, or children.

The Sixth House: Health and Service

The sixth house relates to health, health-oriented routines including nutrition and exercise, and the link between work and health. It also describes your daily work or chores, duties, job-oriented relationships, service to others, and capacity for self-sacrifice.

The Seventh House: One-on-One Relationships

Traditionally the house of marriage and partnerships, the seventh represents all one-on-one relationships—business and personal, including relationships with known enemies.

The Eighth House: Transformation

The eighth is the house of the past, transformative change, death, inheritance, and other people's resources. In this case, death usually refers to the end of something old so that something new can emerge, not necessarily the death of a person. The eighth house also shows how another's resources affect you.

The Ninth House: Higher Knowledge

The ninth house represents the higher mind, philosophy, religion/spirituality, the law, and advanced education, as well as long-

distance travel, especially to foreign lands. This house shows your search for meaning and how you go about expanding your horizons and knowledge of the world.

The Tenth House: Life Task

The tenth house represents social or professional status, career, public image, and parents (the father especially). Authority, responsibilities, honor, and reputation are tenth-house matters, too.

The Eleventh House: Friendships

The eleventh house refers to your friends and groups with which you are affiliated. Goals, hopes, and wishes are shown by this house, too.

The Twelfth House: The Hidden Realm

The twelfth house represents that which is hidden, or not yet revealed, including your dreams and fantasies. It also reveals your latent talents as well as fears, weaknesses, secrets, and unknown enemies. Because matters associated with this sector are often unknown to you, the house is sometimes connected with self-undoing.

Tarot's Potential Is Never Fully Tapped

A Tool for Personal Growth

Many people believe the most valuable role for the Tarot is as a tool for personal growth. Some decks, such as the Jungian Tarot and One World Tarot, are designed specifically to augment spiritual and psychological development. Of course, any deck—and any reading—can reveal important psychological issues you need to address, and they often do. Many spreads are designed to take into account the emotional, spiritual, and psychological dynamics that are affecting the subject of the reading, but you can intentionally choose to work with the Tarot to understand and heal particular problems in your life.

Make Time to Meditate and Contemplate

Meditating with Tarot cards is a simple and relaxing way to connect with your intuition. The simplest way to do this is to select a single card that represents an issue you are dealing with and remove it from the deck.

Tricks of Tarot

Continue meditating on a chosen card day after day, until you have resolved the concern or developed the qualities you seek. You might also wish to display the card in a place where you will see it often throughout the day. Each time you look at it, you'll be reminded of your intention.

If you feel vulnerable or uncertain in a romantic relationship, for instance, you might choose the Page of Cups to contemplate. If you are embroiled in ego battles with coworkers, pick the Five of Wands. Or choose a card that symbolizes a characteristic you wish to develop in yourself. Strength, for example, can help you build inner power, patience, and

perseverance. The Queen of Cups can encourage receptivity, acceptance, and flexibility in relationships.

Relax, calm, and center yourself, then gaze at the image on the card, without trying to analyze it too closely. Allow the symbols pictured there to speak directly to your subconscious. They will trigger inner awarenesses and gently work on the conditions that are influencing the situation. As the card's meaning imprints itself on your mind, you will notice the traits you desire becoming more available to you, and/or you'll experience an increased ability to handle the situation that is challenging you.

Is Your Inner Knowing Trying to Tell You Something?

Tarot cards can also help you to diagnose difficulties—physical as well as psychological. Let's say, for example, that you are experiencing lower back pain. You could ask the Tarot, "What factors are involved in this condition?" Then randomly draw one or more cards from the deck. In this instance, you might pick the Three of Swords, which suggests that your back pain is linked with the emotional pain in a disappointing love relationship. If you drew the Ten of Wands, you might determine that carrying a heavy load—either physically or personally—caused the problem.

Allow your inner knowing to communicate with you. Don't necessarily stick to standard interpretations; whatever pops into your mind could be meaningful. Maybe you picked The Star in response to a query about a sore throat that's been bothering you. This card usually represents hope—it probably indicates that your sore throat isn't serious and you will soon be fine. But if The Star card in your deck depicts a woman kneeling in water, it could be telling you that your malady is connected with getting wet and chilled.

You can also use the cards as aids to healing. The Nine of Wands, for example, is considered a card of recovery. Gaze at it when you are ill and breathe in its vibrations to facilitate well-being. Or lay it on an injury to send positive energy to the wound. Some people like to position seven beneficial cards on their bodies at the seven chakra points. Although this method is not a science and is certainly not a substitute for qualified medical care, the cards can often shed light on situations and may offer guidance for healing problems.

Tarot Cards, Encyclopedias of Knowledge

In recent years, many Tarot designers have incorporated subjects of special interest—both esoteric and mundane—into their decks. These intriguing decks not only offer users the traditional benefits, they also provide an interesting way to learn about a new topic or field of study. For instance, the Australian Animal Tarot deck introduces you to the wildlife of the continent. The Goddess Tarot serves as an encyclopedia of goddesses from many countries and cultures. From angels to Zen, whatever your interest you can probably find a Tarot deck that will teach you about it.

Use Your Creativity to Create Your Own Deck

Creating your own deck is the ultimate Tarot experience. Whether or not you believe you have artistic ability, you can embark on this journey of self-expression and discovery. Choose whatever medium appeals to you—watercolors, acrylic, oils, pen and ink, colored pencils, pastels, woodcut, collage, fabric, crayons, computer imaging, or another medium. Give yourself permission to experiment. What matters is that the images depict your own interpretations of the cards in your own way.

Creating your personal Tarot deck requires you to design and render seventy-eight individual pictures, unless you opt to do only the twenty-two Major Arcana cards. Therefore, you should be willing to commit to a project that may take months or even years to complete.

A Truth About Tarot

When designing your own personal Tarot deck, you may choose to start with cards that depict conditions you wish to attract into your life. For example, you could focus first on only creating positive cards.

One way to approach the design process is to work on cards that represent issues that are currently in the forefront of your life. For instance, if you are resting and recuperating after an illness or injury, you might relate to the Four of Swords and decide to depict it. As you create the card, you'll come to a deeper understanding of the situation you are experiencing, and your understanding will naturally be transferred to the card's imagery.

However you decide to go about creating your own Tarot deck, you will find the experience illuminating. Invite your Muse to participate and guide you. Don't judge or censor yourself. Be daring—there are no rules here. Allow for serendipity to enter into the process and above all enjoy yourself!

ALL YOUR SECRETS REVEALED IN THE CARDS!

*Pull **The Lovers** card . . . and find out if he's really into you.*

*Draw **The Wheel of Fortune** card . . . and see if wealth is in your future.*

*Choose **The Star** card . . . and discover your place in the universe!*

Tap into the timeless wisdom of the Tarot and find the answers to life's toughest questions. With this one-stop resource, you'll learn how to interpret all the cards of the Major and Minor Arcana, master several essential spreads, and conduct life-changing readings for yourself and others.

Inside, tarot master Skye Alexander shows you how the cards can help you to:

- Develop your intuition
- Work through personal problems
- Understand the past, reevaluate the present, and predict your future



By helping you to successfully navigate through love, career, family, and life, *The Only Tarot Book You'll Ever Need* will enable you to realize your dreams today. Let the cards be your guide!

Skye Alexander is a New Age enthusiast and educator. She is the author of more than a dozen books, including *Neighborhood Nice Spell*. An artist, interior designer, feng shui practitioner, and astrologer, she lives in Kerrville, TX.

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